أشرف السوانح

HAKĪMUL UMMAT
MAULĀNĀ ASHRAF ‘ALĪ THĀNWĪ

A BIOGRAPHY

VOLUME ONE

Translated by
Maulānā Mahomed Mahomedy

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All praises are due to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. Peace and salutations to the most beloved of Allāh's creation, Muhammad Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

It is solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the prayers of my teachers and seniors that I have been able to complete the translation of *Ashraf as-Sawānih* of Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *quddisa sirruhu*.

While the translation of this book was challenging, it was most enlightening and informative. I make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable me to imbibe and practise on the exceptional teachings of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *quddisa sirruhu*.

I request the reader and especially our scholars and seniors to inform me of any mistakes and slip ups which they come across in this book. Their valuable suggestions on how to improve on this translation will be most welcomed. I can be contacted via email: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

I make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to accept this work, to make it a means for my salvation in this world and the Hereafter, and a source of guidance for the entire world until the day of Resurrection. Āmīn.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

Was salām
Mahomed Mahomedy
4th Muharram al-Harām 1440 A.H.
14 September 2018

INTRODUCTION

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

I, Ashraf ʿAlī, consider it incorrect to write anything about this biography because it is about myself. However, I consider it necessary to highlight certain points. I am therefore setting aside formalities and presenting the following:

1. There seems to be irresponsibility in writing it because it is about a living person, and is against the practice of the majority of the people of the Tarīqah. The wisdom behind not writing about a living person can be gauged from the following Hadīth:

ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: من كان مستنا فليستن بمن قد مات، فإن الحي لا يؤمن عليه الفتنة.[1]

Ibn Masʿūd radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: If anyone wants to emulate another, he must emulate one who has passed away because the living is not free from temptation.

A biography is by and large written for the purpose of emulation. The above Hadīth can therefore be used as a proof for what I am saying.

I said "the majority of the people of the Tarīqah" because there are some elders who wrote autobiographies, e.g. Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūtī *rahimahullāh* and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* – as learnt from reliable sources.

2. By overseeing the writing of my own biography, the committing of excesses is reduced because these are normally committed when there is fanaticism with regard to a person. The possibility of such excesses are reduced because the person [myself] can correct and criticize an account or incident. There is no doubt in the importance of this wisdom.

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[1] جمع الفوائد عن رزين.

As for the possible harm mentioned in the above quoted Hadīth, it can be avoided through constant consciousness of the fact that these conditions [which are written about me] are until the present; Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows what is to happen in the future. Past evidence is not sufficient for the future. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا تَدْرِيْ نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا

No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow.

والغيب عند الله، وهو أعلم بمن اتقى، والعبرة بالخواتيم

Knowledge of the unseen is known to Allāh taʿālā alone. He knows best the one who is righteous. Consideration is taken of the final end.

I beseech Allāh *taʿālā* for steadfastness and hope for the acceptance of my supplications. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh.

The above wisdom is only applicable if emulation is the purpose of writing this biography, as inferred from the above quoted Hadīth. But if the purpose is to increase the knowledge of my associates so that it increases their love for me, then it will also not be incorrect in the light of the following Hadīth:

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: إذا أخى الرجل الرجل فليسأله عن اسمه واسم أبيه وممن هو فإنه أوصل للمودة.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When a person befriends another, he must ask him his name, his father's name and from where he is because this is more likely to engender love.

Now there is no reason to doubt this. Alternatively, if the purpose is to emulate the person in a particular aspect of his life, it will still be permissible provided it is for as long as the person remained in that excellent condition. If he changed later on, he does not deserve emulation. This too is derived from the above quoted Hadīth.

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[1] رواه الترمذي.

After going through a considerable portion of whatever was written thus far, I gathered another benefit, viz. many issues with regard to the Tarīqah came to the fore in the midst of certain specific incidents. Although these issues could have and have been written separately, these incidents take the position of corroborations for them. In this way, they become clearer and have a greater impact on the self. After all, there must be some reason for the Qur'ān to accompany stories with lessons and admonitions.

3. In the hope that there is no exaggeration or extremism in relating incidents, the author has been verifying them with me and showing them to me after having written them. But this does not preclude any praise or purification which is done out of love. Although I rationally dislike such praise and my modesty cannot tolerate it, I did not alter or change them lest it may hurt his feelings. At the same time, I am fully aware and conscious of my faults.

4. There are details with regard to certain incidents which I too do not recall with certainty either because they occurred a very long time ago or I had not paid particular attention to preserving them in my memory. However, bearing in mind the actual purpose and objective, I overlooked them.

5. If I thought that any person will be offended by making mention of his name in any incident – whether as a praise or dispraise – then his name was not mentioned explicitly. However, I could still err in my thoughts of whether he would be offended or not. I request the person's pardon on such occasions. In the same way, I seek his pardon if I erred in mentioning or not mentioning him.

Thānah Bhawan, district Muzaffar Nagar
Khānqāh Imdādīyyah
Muharram al-Harām 1354 A.H.

FOREWORD

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

سبحانك لا علم لنا إلا ما علمتنا، إنك أنت العليم الحكيم

Our past and latter days scholars always had the practice of writing biographies about their leaders. Many internal and external benefits are given in this regard. Based on these many benefits, a large number of associates expressed the wish to pen the biography of Hadrat Aqdas Hakīm al-Ummah Mujaddid al-Millah Qutb al-Irshād Murshid al-ʿĀlam Imām at-Tarīq Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh Hujjatullāh fī al-Ard Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib Thānwī Hanafī Chishtī Sābirī Imdādī *mudda zilluhum al-ʿālī*. However, there were several obstacles which prevented us from carrying out this request. They are:

1. No one had the time which could be devoted to such a mammoth task.
2. It entails many difficulties.
3. Hadrat himself clearly prohibited any biography to be written about him. He makes mention of this in his bequests which will be quoted later in this book.

These were strong obstacles which prevented us from carrying out this task, and no one having the courage to carry it out.

Coincidentally, Janāb Maulwī Hakīm ʿAbd al-Haqq Khān Sāhib Fatahpūrī, a devoted attendant of Hadrat Wālā, developed a strong urge to draw a detailed list of Hadrat Wālā's written works. He bore every type of financial and physical hardship to fulfil this urge (this list will be provided at its place in this biography). When a list of written works of a scholar is drawn up, it is normal to provide some details about the author himself. This is normally referred to as a Tarjumatul Mu'allif (about the author). The Hakīm Sāhib also felt the need for it, and chose this unworthy person for this task. I offered my apologies but he did not accept despite my ineligibility.

The demand became extremely strong, but the above listed obstacles had to be removed. The solution to the first obstacle was that I had taken a long leave from my specific duties. In this way, a certain amount of free time was now available to me. The second obstacle was solved when a considerable amount of subject matter on Hadrat Wālā's life was collated from his writings and speeches. Hakīm Sāhib helped me a lot in this regard. Moreover, I continued obtaining the counsel and assistance of Hadrat Wālā himself. The third obstacle was solved by Hadrat Wālā's own words which the reader must have seen before this foreword.

In short, now that there was a strong demand for such a biography and the obstacles were removed, there remained no excuse. So I commenced the task in Allāh's name. In line with the practice of scholars of including some points about an author when listing his written works, I could have fulfilled the objective by providing a short and concise biography. And this was also my intention. But when a lover starts talking about his beloved, he cannot keep it concise – as is well known to those who know about love. The lengthy narrative which I was obliged to provide could not be realized because Hadrat Wālā himself continually removed paragraphs at a time. So I could say that this collection is now a balanced biography [neither concise nor too lengthy].

Keeping in line with Hadrat Wālā's noble name, this biography is titled *Ashraf as-Sawānih* (the noblest of biographies) and its historical title is given as *Sīrat Ashraf-e-Zamānah* (the life of the noblest of our era).

Finally, I consider it essential to state that I am an ordinary person who does not know how to write. The reader should therefore focus on the fundamental objective, viz. the pure biography of Hadrat Wālā, and not at the beauty or ugliness of my writing. This too was my main focus. Or else, an unqualified person like me could not have had the audacity to pick up a pen to write on such an important subject. Since this task was for the scholars, I had to strive much more, bear immense hardships, and the fact of the matter is that I could not fulfil this duty. I now supplicate to Allāh *taʿālā* to pardon my internal and external shortcomings, to accept this biography, make it beneficial, to maintain Hadrat Wālā with wellbeing, goodness and blessings forever, and to continually

enable the Muslims to derive blessings and benefit from H̲ad̲rat Wālā's blessed self. Āmīn.

أحقر الزمن عزيز الحسن عفا عنه الله ذو المنن، وحفظه عن جميع الشرور والفتن ما ظهر منها وما بطن.

'Azīz al-H̲asan, *may Allāh pardon him.*
21 Muh̲arram al-H̲arām 1354 A.H.

NAME AND TITLE

His name is Ashraf ʿAlī. This name was suggested not only before Hadrat Wālā’s birth but before he could be conceived by Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh*, a well respected and popular personality of his time. Details in this regard will be provided in the discussion on his blessed birth. This name has the blessed coincidence of being the name of a Sahābī (as stated in *al-Isābah*).

This name was initially suggested from Hadrat Wālā’s maternal side because Hadrat Hāfiz Murtadā Sāhib had went there and suggested it. Hadrat Wālā’s paternal side had suggested the name ʿAbd al-Ghanī, but when the men of Allāh say something, it is as if Allāh has said it. And so, Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib’s suggested name became popular, while the latter, ʿAbd al-Ghanī, did not. However, Hadrat Wālā did use it in one of his writings titled, *al-Khutūb al-Mudhībah*, because it was considered more wise to use it on such an occasion. Similarly, Hadrat Wālā’s younger brother, was named Akbar ʿAlī by Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib from the maternal side, while he was named Muzaffar from the paternal side.

His title is Hakīm al-Ummah (the specialist physician of the Muslim community) which Allāh *taʿālā* cast in the hearts of all sections of the community since a very long time. This title is well known everywhere. As far as Hadrat Wālā remembers, Maulwī Mirzā Muhammad Baig Sāhib Marhūm, the owner of Mahbūb al-Matābiʿ Printing Press, was the first to write this title in a letter which he addressed to Hadrat Wālā. Thereafter, Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows how it spread and everyone began addressing him by this title. It is said that Mirzā ʿAbd al-Hakīm Sāhib Siyālkautī was the first to use the title Mujaddid Alf Thānī for Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*. Allāh *taʿālā* then popularized this title for him.

وَاللهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ، وَاللهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ

Allāh appoints whomever He wills for His mercy. Allāh is possessor of mighty grace.

NOBLE LINEAGE

Paternal Lineage

Hadrat Wālā is a Fārūqī[1] from his father’s side and an ʿAlawī[2] from his mother’s side. Anyone desiring additional investigation in this regard may refer to the chapter on bequests. His father’s name was ʿAbd al-Haqq. He was an influential and wealthy resident of Thānah Bhawan who possessed a lot of cash and properties. He was very proficient in Persian and adept at writing. Although he was not a qārī, he pronounced the letters of the Qur’ān extremely well. He did not memorize the Qur’ān but his recitation was very fluent and he could even correct those who had memorized it. He was given full authority over a major section of Meerut, and would also take contracts under the permission of the Commiserate. Allāh *taʿālā* blessed him profusely in this business, resulting in thousands of rupees as income which he spent to purchase more properties and for other things which needed monies to be spent.

Hadrat Wālā constantly relates to us that somehow through Allāh-inspired foresight, his father directed him to undertake Islamic studies, and his younger brother, Janāb Munshī Akbar ʿAlī Sāhib Marhūm, to focus on English studies. Hadrat Wālā’s brother was appointed as a secretary at Bareilly Municipality where he earned 500 rupees a month. Hadrat Wālā relates that the beautiful manner in which his father nurtured him and the excellent ways in which he carried out his worldly tasks are proofs of his intelligence and wisdom. Moreover, the intelligence and foresight of Hadrat Wālā’s forefather, Hadrat [ʿUmar] Fārūq Aʿzam *rahimahullāh*, are universally accepted.

Maternal Lineage

Hadrat Wālā received the treasure of intelligence from his father’s side and the treasure of love from his maternal side which is a well-known family whose forefathers were Sufis, the most prominent among them being Hadrat Shāh Shaykh ʿAbd ar-Razzāq Sāhib Jhanjhānwī *rahimahullāh*. The latter’s

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[1] A descendant of Hadrat ʿUmar Fārūq *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.
[2] A descendant of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

distinguished personality can be gauged from the fact that Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haqq Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* speaks very highly of him in his *Akhbār al-Akhyār,* a book containing biographies of the righteous servants of Allāh.

Hadrat Wālā's respected mother was herself an Allāh-fearing woman who enjoyed special affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. This was related to Hadrat Wālā from the elders in his family. Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib attests to her intelligence, foresight, understanding and insight. This will be detailed in the discussion on Hadrat Wālā's birth. The knowledge and love of Hadrat Wālā's maternal forefather, Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, are also universally accepted.

Family Legacy

In short, Hadrat Wālā's combination of intelligence and love, or to put it differently, his combination of the Sharīʿah and Tarīqah which is absolutely obvious and well-known today, and due to which the following couplet applies to him enabled Hadrat Wālā to receive this legacy from his paternal and maternal side:

> In one hand he has the goblet of the Sharīʿah and in the other, the weight of love. A worshipper of his desires cannot strike a balance between a goblet and a weight at one and the same time.

The following couplet comes spontaneously to my mind:

> I inhaled the fragrance of the flower on one side, and received a message from my beloved from the other side. I am gone mad because of the spring which came to me from both sides.

A manifestation of the Fārūqī and ʿAlawī peculiarities

In this way, Hadrat Wālā is – Māshā Allāh – a true representative of his family, and a conglomeration and manifestation of the Fārūqī and ʿAlawī peculiarities. This is the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Why should this not be the case when, after all, it has always been Allāh's norm to confer family honour and noble descent to the one whom He has willed to enjoy a position of instruction and guidance. Allāh *taʿālā* does this so that even people of the

highest strata of society do not consider it below them to follow such a person. This, notwithstanding the fact that there is absolutely no need whatsoever for nobility in order to be accepted in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*. He says in this regard:

فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَلَا اَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَّلَا يَتَسَآئَلُوْنَ

Then when the trumpet is blown, neither will there be any kinship on that day nor will they ask about one another.[1]

اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰكُمْ

Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you.[2]

This is also the advantage of being born in a wealthy family. That is, people of the upper classes do not consider it below their dignity to emulate such a person. Moreover, the person himself does not feel intimidated by anyone of authority and is able to carry out his programme of rectification freely with all types of people. Consequently, Hadrat Wālā used to say with absolute independence:

> By Allāh's grace I am not affected in the least by the authority and external influence of the most influential of people. This is because I think to myself: "He is not wealthy in the least. After all, we too eat and drink at home by Allāh's grace. We too are not the children of any pauper." All praise is due to Allāh, I lived a life of real comfort and spent thousands of rupees with my own hands. Now I do not have any regret with regard to wealth and possessions whereby I have to look at wealthy people with a longing gaze. Once a person's self is filled and satisfied with things, the natural consequence of it is that no greed and avarice whatsoever remains in him."

Hadrat Wālā's peculiar trait of independence is also one of the reasons why he is one of the most well-known and unique personalities of his time, although the essential reason for it is

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 101.
[2] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 13.

his strong bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Quite often, wealthy and affluent people get caught up in their greed and insatiability.

To sum up: Allāh *taʿālā* had decided to confer Hadrat Wālā with the high position of rectification and instruction. This is why He honoured him with phenomenal intelligence and perfect love on one side, and the treasures of a noble lineage, position and family affluence on the other side.

Hadrat Wālā's Maternal Grandfather

It would be appropriate to say something about Hadrat Wālā's maternal grandfather, Pīrjī Najābat ʿAlī Sāhib. He was proficient in the Persian language, poetry and writing. He was known for relating humorous anecdotes, his sharp mind and witticism. He held the position of an advocate at Kanjpūrah. He had pledged bayʿah to a special khalīfah of Maulānā Shāh Niyāz Ahmad Sāhib Barelwī, and had a lot of faith and confidence in Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh*. A deep and special bond existed between the two. Although the latter was a majdhūb, he paid special attention to his training. When Pīrjī Sāhib commenced the path of Sufism and was overcome by dhikr and other spiritual practices, he began disregarding his family and work. Hadrat Wālā's grandmother complained about it, so Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib took away this condition through his focus. Pīrjī Sāhib was most grieved by this and, despite the close bond which existed between the two, he began using harsh words against him. For example, he referred to him as a thief and robber. But Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib did not bother in the least. He did what he had to and continued on his way. Pīrjī Sāhib also settled down and became occupied in his work once again.

When Pīrjī Sāhib was about to leave this world, Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib appeared suddenly. He proceeded directly to his deathbed and said: "Najābat ʿAlī, look at me." The moment Pīrjī turned and looked at him, his previous spiritual condition returned to him and he departed joyfully from this world.

Maternal Uncle

Hadrat Wālā's maternal uncle, Pīrjī Imdād ʿAlī Sāhib, was also a man of powerful spiritual conditions and intense love for Allāh *taʿālā*. At times he would be overcome by this love and do things which were not appropriate for the general good. Hadrat

Wālā himself says that it seemed as if a fire was emanating from his words and the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* could be applied to him:

> I am slave to those things which ignite a fire. So do not pour cold water over a blazing fire.

Hadrat Hāfiz Murtadā Sāhib also had an influence on him. He had a totally carefree temperament in the beginning. He became fed up looking for a source of income and came to Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib one day and said: "You either devote me totally to this world or totally to Dīn. I do not want this in-between condition." Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib responded heatedly: "Go, go to Hyderabad. Go, the Nawāb Sāhib is calling you."

Pīrjī Sāhib was most disturbed at hearing this and said: "Oh, it seems I have received nothing but this world. What a foolish thing I did! I should not have even mentioned the world. I ought to have sought the Dīn alone. Anyway, whatever was bound to happen has happened. This is my lot."

He assumed he will earn a livelihood by going to the region of the Nawāb of Hyderabad. So he reached there in search of a job and also found one. However, true love for Allāh *ta'ālā* was naturally embedded in him and his heart pained out of His love from the very beginning. So even while occupied in his job, he was searching for a shaykh. To this end, he went and met most of the Sufis of Hyderabad but was not attracted to most of them because they spoke ill of Hadrat Maulānā Ismā'īl Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh* while Pīrjī had immense faith and confidence in him. He loved the fact that Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* sacrificed his life and honour for Allāh's sake while some people could not abstain from this world – a quality which was a special trait in Pīrjī. He eventually went to Mirzā Sardār Baig Sāhib who had been a senior chief and a well known Nawāb. He gave up all these positions and adopted the life of a dervish. He underwent a lot of spiritual exertion and abstinence from this world. Pīrjī's heart was very attracted to him, but as a precaution, he wrote a letter to Pīr Ahmad Sāhib who was the son of Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib and said: "There are a few Sufis here. Ask Hāfiz Sāhib and inform me which of them I should refer to."

When Hāfiz Sāhib was asked, he did not give any verbal reply. Instead, he removed the blanket which was wrapped around

him, burnt it, and sat down aloof from everyone. When Pīrjī Sāhib was informed of this, he did not understand it. When he presented himself before Mirzā Sāhib, the latter said in the course of their general discussion: “Just as a person is taught and instructed verbally, he is also instructed through actions.” He then related the story of the parrot which is mentioned in the *Mathnawī*. The parrot made itself to appear dead, and in this way instructed the other parrots to do the same if they wanted freedom.

The moment Pīrjī Sāhib heard this story, his mind went immediately to Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib and the burning of his blanket. He deduced from the practical demonstration that he must pledge bayʿah to such a person who has divested himself of all worldly engagements. There was no one apart from Mirzā Sāhib in this area. No sooner this thought entered his mind, the fire of love for Mirzā Sāhib ignited in his heart and he pledged allegiance to him after much persistence from his side and refusal from Mirzā Sāhib.

Great Grandfather

Although this subject is becoming quite lengthy, I feel that if important incidents and events concerning certain elders of the family are not related, we will not be able to gain sufficient insight into the subject of “noble descent”. I consider it fitting to relate an incident which took place with Hadrat Wālā’s great grandfather, Muhammad Farīd Sāhib, and to relate something about his forefather, Hadrat Sultan Shihāb ad-Dīn ʿAlī, well known as Farkh Shāh Kābulī.

Hadrat Wālā’s great grandfather was martyred in the area between Kīrānah and Shāmlī, and was buried near the grave of Shaykh Samā’ ad-Dīn Sāhib. In the beginning, an ʿurs used to be celebrated for him. He was accompanying a marriage party when some robbers attacked the entire entourage. Hadrat Wālā’s great grandfather was carrying a bow and arrows. He began shooting arrows towards the thieves. But they were in large numbers while the marriage party was ill-equipped. He was martyred in this exchange and became a manifestation of the following Hadīth:

من قتل دون ماله فهو شهيد، ومن قتل دون دمه فهو شهيد، ومن قتل دون أهله فهو شهيد، ومن قتل دون مظلمته فهو شهيد.[1]

The one who is killed in the defence of his wealth is a martyr. The one who is killed in the defence of his life is a martyr. The one who is killed in the defence of his family is a martyr. The one who is killed in the defence of an injustice which was committed against him is a martyr.

A strange incident occurred after his martyrdom. He came at night to his family like a living person, offered them sweetmeats and said: "If you do not inform anyone of this, I will come like this daily to you." But his family feared that the rest of the family will have certain suspicions if they saw their children eating sweetmeats, so they related it to others. He did not come back. This incident is well known in the family.

Forefather, H̲ad̲rat Farkh Shāh

The elders of Thānah Bhawan, H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rah̲imahullāh*, H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Jalāl ad-Dīn Thānesarī *rah̲imahullāh* and H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn Ganj Shakkar *rah̲imahullāh* are all from the progeny of Sultan Shihāb ad-Dīn, known as Farkh Shāh Kābulī. Their affiliation with him is mentioned in *Zubdatul Maqāmāt*.

Sultan Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Alī is from among the senior spiritual masters. His title is Farkh Shāh. He was a governor of Kabul before joining the ranks of the Sufis. With the fall of the Ghaznawī Sultanate, he came to India with a large army on several occasions for the sake of propagating Islam, waging jihād and putting an end to idol worship. He was victorious and returned to Kabul with large amounts of booty. Through Allāh's kindness, he eventually turned to Sufism, joined the T̲arīqah 'Āliyah Chishtīyyah, benefited from its masters and reached a level of perfection. An entire world was irrigated from his fountain of blessings.

After giving up the sultanate and choosing a life of a Sufi, he spent the rest of his days in Kabul where he occupied himself in conveying his blessings and teachings to Allāh's creation, and was buried there after his demise. To this day, the place

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[1] جمع الفوائد.

where he is buried is well known as Darah Farkh Shāh, and his blessed grave is visited by all types of people.

A Family Which Combined Sufism With Royalty

From the previously related incidents and details, the reader must have gauged that as regards the internal and external, Hadrat's paternal and maternal families and forefathers had affiliations with the royalty, and combined royalty with Sufism. And based on the saying:

الولد سر لأبيه

A child maintains the secrets of his forefathers.

Hadrat possessed both traits and characteristics, one in the form of submission, servitude, self-obliteration and humbleness; and the other in the from of awe, excellent planning and organization and independence. All of which were manifested to perfection in him. The following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* was applicable to him:

> O beloved! Royal effulgence is glittering on your face and your thoughts conceal countless wisdoms of Allāh.
>
> May Allāh bless you in your pen for it is open for the supremacy of Dīn. A single black drop [of ink] gives rise to the gushing forth of thousands of springs of immortality.

When I see Hadrat Wālā's comprehensive nature, I spontaneously recall this couplet:

> I may be a slave of the tavern, but when I am intoxicated, I vex my pride over the heavens and impose my rule over the stars.

In short, by the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā*, Hadrat Wālā did not only possess personal merits, but was also of noble descent and belonged to a distinguished family. All praise is due to Allāh. This is the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Note: I had stated that Hadrat Wālā inherited the treasures of intelligence from his paternal side and of love from his maternal side. This refers to his natural capabilities which remain dormant and only become active through the blessings

of a spiritual mentor. Through his blessings all types of righteous capabilities come to the fore and are passed on to others. However, a natural capability is in itself a great bounty and gift from Allāh *taʿālā*, and is a basis for all future merits and excellences. Furthermore, it is not effective without the instruction and tutoring of a spiritual mentor. As a poet says:

> There is no difference of opinion as regards the natural pleasantness of rain. However, in an orchard flowers bloom through it, while in a brackish land, you get brushwood and thorns.

I considered it necessary to make mention of this natural capability in the discussion on Hadrat Wālā's noble descent.

HOMETOWN

Thānah Bhawan

Hadrat Wālā's beloved hometown is Thānah Bhawan which falls under the district of Muzaffar Nagar. Its original name was Thānah Bhīm because it was a "thāna" (sub-police station) of Rajah Bhīm at some time in its history. It came to be known as Thānah Bhawan through constant usage. When Muslims came and inhabited this place, the forefathers of some of the noblemen named it Muhammad Pūr after one of their children whose name was Fath Muhammad. This name is found in the royal documents. But it is generally known by its old name of Thānah Bhawan. Long before the Indian Mutiny, it had a population of forty eight thousand. Shortly before the Mutiny, it dropped to thirty six thousand. Now there are only six to seven thousand residents. The effects of the Mutiny reached Thānah Bhawan in Muharram 1274 A.H.

A Historical Town

Thānah Bhawan is a popular and well known historical town of Agra and Oudh. It was always inhabited by noble Muslim families, especially the elders of Farūqī lineage who enjoyed power, influence and owned properties. Although there is more poverty at present, by Allāh's grace there are still a few influential personalities. People of various arts and crafts lived here. Stories of their achievements are found in books and spoken about to this day. Very senior officials and property owners also lived here during the era of the kings.

A Land Of Scholars

The intelligentsia are particularly well known here. An Englishman who was an officer-in-charge presented a report about the residents of various towns. When it came to the residents of Thānah Bhawan, he referred to them by the title of "the intelligentsia of Thānah". To the best of my knowledge, no other region of India enjoys as many towns which are inhabited by the Muslim nobility. Towns such as Gangoh, Kīrānah, Jhanjhān, Kāndhla, Pānīpat, etc. The religiosity and concern for Islamic knowledge which is observed in this region is not seen anywhere else. The large numbers of erudite 'ulamā',

scholars and Sufis who lived in this region and are living at present are not found anywhere else.

Shaykh Maʿshūq ʿAlī Sāhib was a religious, intelligent and sharp-minded personality of Qanūj. He said to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion: "The people of this region have surpassed the people of our area in every field. The learned of this region are better than those of my area. The ignorant ones of this region are better than those of my area. In fact, even the unbelievers of this region are better than those of my area." Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* couplet seems to apply here:

> Even though the hawk may occasionally place a hat on its head, the birds of the Caucasus mountains know fully well what the royal protocol is.

Hadrat Wālā's Paternal And Maternal Hometown

Hadrat Wālā's paternal and maternal families are both from Thānah Bhawan. His maternal forefathers first lived in Jhanjhānah. The father of Hadrat Wāla's maternal grandfather then came and settled down in Thānah Bhawan. From his paternal forefathers, mention is made of Maulānā Sadr Jahān, a contemporary of Qādī Muhammad Nasrullāh Khān, in documents which were recorded during the rule of King Akbar. His forefathers moved from Thānesar, district Karnāl, and settled down in Thānah Bhawan. Before coming to Thānesar, they lived in Ghaznīn and Kabul. Their lineage goes up to Farkh Shāh Kābulī about whom some details were provided in the previous chapter.

BIRTH

Date Of Birth

Hadrat Wālā was born on 5 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1280 A.H. on a Wednesday at the time of true dawn. Coincidentally, the writing of this biography commenced this year on the 5th of Rabīʿ ath-Thānī on a Wednesday. All praise is due to Allāh, Hadrat Wālā turned seventy three on this day. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless him with an extraordinary long life with external and internal blessings, with eternal good health and wellbeing. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable his shadow of affection to remain over the followers of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for a long time. Āmīn.

Place Of Birth

Hadrat Wālā was born in the house of his maternal family which is in the Khayl district [of Thānah Bhawan] and is now in the share of the children of Pīrjī Shaukat ʿAlī Sāhib Marhūm.

Incident Of His Birth

The incident of Hadrat Wālā's birth is most strange and unique, and is quite well known in the family. Hadrat Wālā heard it personally from the elders of the family and from those who were present, and penned it.

Hadrat Wālā's father fell ill and suffered from severe scabies. No medication was of any help. A doctor informed him that an elixir would help, but its side effect is that it would prevent one from having children. His illness had really taken its toll on him and he decided to take the medication thinking to himself that survival of one's own self takes precedence over survival of one's progeny. When Hadrat Wālā's mother came to know of this, she was quite disturbed because no male offspring survived till that point. Hadrat Wālā's maternal grandmother eventually came to learn about it and she too became worried. She complained to Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib Majdhūb Pānīpattī (who, coincidentally had come to visit her husband). She said to him: "Hadrat, no male offspring survives from this daughter of mine." Hāfiz Sāhib said by way of an

allusion: “They die because of the conflict between ʿUmar and ʿAlī. Now is the turn for ʿAlī, and the child will survive.”

No one understood the allusion at the time but Hadrat Wālā’s mother understood it by virtue of her Allāh-bestowed intelligence and insight, and solved the puzzle. She said: “What Hāfiz Sāhib means is that the father is a Fārūqī and the mother is an ʿAlawī. Till now, the male children who were born were named from the father’s side, e.g. Fadl Haq, etc. Now when a child is born, he must be given a name from the mother’s side, and it must end with ʿAlī.” When Hāfiz Sāhib heard this, he laughed and said: “This is really what I had meant. This woman appears to be extremely intelligent.”

Hāfiz Sāhib added: “Inshā Allāh, she will give birth to two sons and they will survive. You must name one Ashraf ʿAlī Khān and the other, Akbar ʿAlī Khān.” When giving these names, he added the appellation of Khān from his side. So someone asked: “Hadrat, will these boys be Pathāns?” He replied: “No. You must name them Ashraf ʿAlī and Akbar ʿAlī.” He also said: “Both will be wealthy. One of them will be mine – he will be a maulwī and a hāfiz; the other will be religious.”

All these predictions proved to be absolutely true. Hadrat Wālā says: “Occasionally you hear me making disjointed statements. This is the effect of Majdhūb Sāhib’s spiritual focus through whose supplications I was born. I have a liberal temperament like majdhūb’s,[1] I cannot bear complicated and confusing issues.”

A Childhood Dream

Hadrat Wālā writes about a dream which he saw during his student days. It concerns Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib’s spiritual focus. I feel I should quote it here:

I dreamt of an elderly man during my student days at Deoband. He asked me: “How old are you, and when will the next year of your age commence?” I told him my age and informed him that it will be on 5th Rabīʿ ath-Thānī. He said: “If you fast two days before the arrival of that date, you will experience much blessings.” I did what he said and followed

[1] A majdhūb is one who is lost and immersed in the meditation of Allāh *taʿālā*. He appears like a mad man.

this practice for several years, but eventually became lazy. In one of those years, I did fast, but I think I kept only one fast. I related this dream to an elder in my family. He asked me to describe the one whom I had seen in my dream. When I described the man to him, he said: "You had dreamt of Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib." He was a mujdhūb but a pure personality who was spoken about in glowing terms by the spiritual masters. Even Hadrat Murshidī Hājī Sāhib[1] *qaddasallāhu sirrahu* spoke highly of him."

The strange incident of Hadrat Wālā's birth is a clear example and manifestation of Allāh's words:

وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِيْ

I selected you for Myself.

All other aspects of Hadrat Wālā's biography are details and testimonies of this.

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[1] Reference is made to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

CHILDHOOD

Hadrat Wālā's Foster Mother

Hadrat Wālā's younger brother was born just fourteen months after Hadrat Wālā's birth, so the milk was not enough for both. A foster mother was obtained for Hadrat Wālā. She was from a village of Meerut and was a merciless person. Consequently, Hadrat Wālā used to say jokingly: "I drank the milk of a merciless women, this is why there is some sharpness in my temperament. But – all praise is due to Allāh – there is no severity in my temperament. My heart is so soft that I cannot see the slightest discomfort in anyone. If I see the slightest discomfort in anyone, my heart melts and goes out to him." Hadrat Wālā tried his utmost to enquire about his foster mother's children so that he could maintain relations with them but he could not establish their whereabouts. His concern for them was based on a natural bond and in emulation of the Sunnah.

Mother's Demise

Hadrat Wālā was only about five years old when the affectionate shadow of his mother was lifted from him. Hadrat Wālā says: "I cannot recall my mother's face and appearance fully, but whenever I think of her, I can recall her sitting at the foot of her bed. This particular scene has remained in my mind. I cannot recall anything else because I was very young. I was just four or five years old."

Father's Affection

Hadrat Wālā says: "After my mother passed away, my father took care of us [both brothers] with real love and affection. For breakfast he used to feed us a special rotī with ghee, make it into tiny morsels and feed it to us with his own hands. He took care of us with such love that he even made us forget the grief of our mother's departure. He showed us more love than our mother. Despite his quick temperament, he rarely became angry at us. He brought us up with many comforts and luxuries. He was especially soft and affectionate towards me. So much so that my aunt asked him: 'How is it that when the boys are mischievous, you hit the younger one more. I rarely

see you hitting the elder one.' He replied: 'First of all, it is the younger one who teaches him all the mischief. Secondly, he learns his lessons while the younger one doesn't. This is why I love him more.'"

"In short, very rarely did he give me a hiding, and rarely did I receive a hiding from my teachers. In fact, it was almost non-existent because I used to learn my lessons and was well-mannered. If we were ever offended by our father's anger, we would abstain from eating. If he asked us the reason for not eating, we would reply that we were not hungry. He would immediately call for his small box, give us one rupee each and say: 'Here, take this. You will feel hungry now.' We would become happy and join in the meal.'"

Training

It was a practice to distribute sweetmeats in the musjid when the Qur'ān was completed in the tarāwīh salāh. My father would never permit us to take part in this. Instead, he would personally go on that day to the shops, purchase sweetmeats and give us far more than what we would have received in the musjid. He used to say: "It is most undignified to go to the musjid to receive sweetmeats." This was the excellent manner in which he used to save us from greed and teach us the lesson of self-respect and dignity.

I was engaged in a casual conversation with my father when I was still a student. In the course of the conversation, I unwittingly said about Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib – the ex-principal of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband: "Maulānā is not well-read." This was a fact because Maulānā did not study too much of the external sciences. Yes, he was a good administrator and a pious personality. But when my father heard my statement, he became angry and reprimanded me saying: "Does anyone ever say such things about the pious personalities?!" He became so angry that he got up to come and hit me, but he did not. In this way, he was very vigilant about our character. At the same time, he showed us extreme love and affection.

Highest Level Of Intelligence

Hadrat Wālā's intelligence was clearly visible even during his childhood days of mischief. He was able to think up and

contrive innovative ways. He himself relates: “It was the monsoon season but the rains were falling intermittently. Our bedsteads used to remain outside. When it started to rain, they were brought indoors. When the rain stopped, they were taken outside. My mother had passed away, and it was only my father and we two brothers who were living in the house. All our three bedsteads used to be placed next to each other. One day, I took a rope and tied the legs of each bedstead with the legs of the one next to it. When it started to rain at night, my father began dragging a bedstead inside. But whichever one he pulled, the other two would be dragged in the process. He tried to untie the ropes but they were not getting untied because I had tied them extremely tight. He wanted to cut off the ropes, but could not find a knife. In short, he was really vexed and the legs were eventually undone after a lot of effort. The bedsteads were then brought indoors. This entire process took very long, causing the bedsteads to be drenched. My father was very angry by this stupid act.”

This happened when Hadrat Wālā was very young. He recalls another incident which occurred after he completed memorizing the Qur’ān. There was a blind hāfiz who knew the Qur’ān very well and was quite proud about it. Before Hadrat Wālā could reach the age of maturity, he used to read the Qur’ān to him in optional salāh. He was revising the Qur’ān with him in one of the days of Ramadān. In the course of revising it to him, Hadrat Wālā warned him saying: “Hāfizjī, I will deceive you today, and I am even telling you that I will deceive you in such and such verse.” The Hāfizjī said: “Hey Miyā! Where will you ever be able to bluff me. Many senior memorizers of the Qur’ān could not bluff and deceive me.”

Hadrat Wālā stood up and commenced the salāh. When he reached the following verse:

اِنَّمَا اَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَّلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

He read it extremely slowly, as is his norm when he is approaching the end of his recitation and is about to go into rukū‘. Then when he was about to read the next verse, which reads: *Allāhu ya‘lamu…* he elongated the word “Allāh” as if he was about to go into rukū‘ and was actually going to say the takbīr, *Allāhu Akbar*. The Hāfizjī assumed Hadrat Wālā was going into rukū‘, so he went immediately into rukū’. In the

meantime, Hadrat Wālā continued with the recitation: *Allāhu ya'lamu mā tahmilu…*So the Hāfizjī was in rukū' while the recitation was carrying on. Hāfizjī stood up immediately from the rukū'. When Hadrat Wālā realized this, he was completely overtaken by laughter and broke his salāh.

Hadrat Wālā's father was sitting at a small distance on his bed and listening to the recitation. He asked what transpired and Hadrat Wālā explained to him. Although his father was serious by nature, he too smiled. Hadrat Wālā knew that when a minor laughs in salāh his wudū' does not break; only the salāh is rendered invalid. So he was about to restart his salāh, but his father stopped him saying: "Not now. Laugh as much as you like first or else you will be overtaken by laughter in your salāh and break your salāh again." His father was a very wise man. When Hadrat Wālā finished laughing to his fill, he restarted his salāh and read that amount of the Qur'ān which was to be completed for that day.

Hadrat Wālā says: "By Allāh's grace, no matter where I lived, I was loved by my relatives and near ones. This, despite my mischievous acts during my childhood. However, I did not commit the filthy mischief as is committed by children of today. So instead of being offended by my mischief, people considered it to be agreeable and acceptable. During Diwali,[1] lamps used to be lit on both sides of the street in Meerut cantonment. My brother and I would walk on either side of the street and put the lamps off by flapping our hankies over the flame. We would start from one end of the street and continue putting them off as we proceeded. No one was offended by this; not even the Hindus."

Enthusiasm For Worship

Hadrat Wālā was most enthusiastic about salāh since childhood. He would even include it in his games. For example, he would gather the shoes of all his friends and line them up in rows, and place one shoe in the front [mimicking the rows of salāh with the imām at front]. He would be happy over the fact that even the shoes are performing salāh. He was also keen about delivering lectures and would imitate others. When he was sent to the shops to buy any item, he had to pass by the

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[1] A Hindu celebration.

musjid. He would go into the musjid, proceed directly to the pulpit, and do as if he was delivering a sermon. This would not be during a salāh time, so he would be alone in the musjid. No one would be watching him, so he did not even feel shy. He would give full vent to his enthusiasm and deliver a lecture for as long as he liked. It seemed as if delivering speeches and lectures was his passion since childhood. This too displays Allāh’s power.

It shows that Hadrat Wālā was enthusiastic about religious activities since his early days. He studied a few elementary Arabic books when he was extremely young. He was only twelve or thirteen years old when he commenced waking up in the latter part of the night for tahajjud and occupying himself in optional salāh and other devotional practices. His foster mother showed extreme love to him and would prohibit him saying: “O my child! You are still very young.” She used to feel very sorry for him. This was especially so during the winter season. She would observe him waking up in the cold winter nights, performing wudū’ and occupying himself in tahajjud. The poor woman would feel sorry for him and, out of her extreme love for him, she would remain awake until he completed his tahajjud and devotional practices.

Hadrat Wālā relates: “I developed enthusiasm for Dīn – of which tahajjud is one branch – from remaining in the company of my elementary teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Fath Muhammad Sāhib, who was a blessed personality, a man of close affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* and one who was a spiritual master himself.” Hadrat Wālā abstained from playing with his peers because he was aware of their evil ways. He used to remain indoors and play with his sister. The other boys did not like his aloofness. They used to walk around with knives with the intention of killing him if they came across him. He used to proceed and return from maktab while accompanied by one of the workers. When the boys insisted on causing mischief to him, it was reported to the police. A policeman summoned Hadrat Wālā and all the boys, took the cane which was in Hadrat Wālā’s hand and gave a thorough beating to all the boys. No one had the courage to do anything after that, and Hadrat Wālā’s fears were removed.

Delicate Disposition

Hadrat Wālā could not tolerate looking at any person's exposed stomach. He would vomit the moment he set eyes on it. Hadrat Wālā heard about this from the elders in his family. The other boys knew about it, so they would expose their stomachs before him in order to vex him. Hadrat Wālā would be reduced to vomiting and feeling uncomfortable. The effects of this delicate disposition are present to this day. Hadrat Wālā is extremely sensitive. He cannot fall asleep in a room if a sharp smelling item is placed in it, e.g. guavas. As for foul smelling items, there is no question about his sensitivity to them.

I personally observed this during our journey to Allāhābād. As long as a basket of guavas were not removed from the room, Hadrat Wālā could not fall asleep. Also during this trip, a considerable amount of raw tobacco was placed at quite a distance in a provisions shop. Despite the distance, Hadrat Wālā perceived the smell. When we made inquiries, we learnt that it was really tobacco which was placed there.

Just recently a person sent some halwā (a sweetmeat) which was placed in an ugly looking container. When he tasted it, it seemed to have a terrible taste. We thought of giving it away to someone. But when it was placed in a beautiful glass jar and then Hadrat Wālā tasted it, he gauged that it had a good taste. His delicate disposition could not accept it because it was kept in a bad way in an ugly container.

Hadrat Wālā could not eat or drink anyone's leftover food or water. He recoiled from it. In fact, he could not even eat or drink the left over food or water of pious personalities which is normally taken as a source of blessings. However, he did not disapprove of anyone joining him in eating from the same utensil. He could not get sleep if the replying of letters was not completed by the night. On countless journeys I observed him delivering lectures until half the night, he would then sit with all his post and will not stop replying to the letters until he completed a major portion of them. He would say: "I cannot fall asleep even if I want to unless I complete answering such a number of letters which reduces the load to a manageable number." He would receive several days of post while on his journeys, and spend major portions of the night replying to the letters. There were times when he commenced after ʿishā and continued answering letters until the adhān of fajr.

Incidents concerning Hadrat Wālā's delicate disposition are observed on a daily basis. If any of his associates delivered a confusing lecture or did something incorrectly, he would get a light fever and headache immediately. This, despite the fact that – by Allāh's will – his mind is so strong that he engages in mental work throughout the day right until he goes to sleep. He is never free at any time. He says: "Since childhood my brains are accustomed to the fact that if even the most ordinary matters are not explained in sequence, I cannot understand them. I cannot deliver a confusing lecture nor understand a confusing lecture of anyone. This is because my brain is used to a special sequence since childhood."

In short, Hadrat Wālā's delicate disposition resembles, to a certain extent, the delicate disposition of Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānā *rahimahullāh*. This is observed on a daily basis. Hadrat Wālā himself quotes the words of our senior Pīrānī Sāhibah [Hadrat Wālā's wife]: "You should have been born in a king's palace."

Glad Tidings Of Spiritual Progress

Hadrat Wālā relates a dream which he saw when he was a child. He does not remember any dream before it. He says: "The house in which we lived in Meerut had two porches. I saw a cage with two beautiful pigeons placed in the larger porch. Night falls and it becomes dark. The pigeons say to me: 'It is dark, bring some light to our cage.' I replied: 'You can do it yourselves.' They begin rubbing their beaks vigorously resulting in a bright light which illuminated the whole cage. After some time, I related this dream to my uncle, Wājid 'Alī Sāhib Marhūm. He interpreted it as follows: 'The two pigeons represent the soul and the self (rūh and nafs) because the Sufis consider the soul to be male and the self to be female. So the soul and the self requested you to strive and illuminate them. When you asked them to do it themselves, they rubbed their beaks and illuminated the cage. This means that you will not engage in spiritual exercises and exertion. Allāh willing, Allāh *taʿālā* will illuminate your soul and self with the light of cognition without having to strive for it.'" Hadrat Wālā adds: "Anyway, one part of the interpretation was correct in the sense that I did not engage in much spiritual exercises and exertion. But the light has not developed as yet. May Allāh *taʿālā* realize it for me."

Hadrat Shaykh Muhammad Thānwī's Prediction

Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muhammad Sāhib Muhaddith Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was one of the senior khulafā' of Hadrat Miyājī Nūr Muhammad Sāhib *nawwarallāhu marqadahu* and a Pīr Bhāi[1] of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*. He used to say with reference to Hadrat Wālā when the latter was still a child studying in the maktab: "This boy will take my place after me." By Allāh's grace, this is exactly what happened. After the Maulānā passed away, Hadrat Wālā became the sole exponent of internal and external sciences in this town [Thānah Bhawan]. The Maulānā had a special bond with Hadrat Wālā. Even after he passed away, he addressed Hadrat Wālā in a dream: "Our focus is still on you exactly as it had been when we were alive." Hadrat Wālā was very young when the Maulānā was alive. There were some claims and counter claims between Hadrat Wālā's father and the Maulānā. Hadrat Wālā's father wanted to send some betel leaf to him as a gift, so he said to Hadrat Wālā: "You should rather take it, he is more likely to accept it from you. If not, he will not accept it." The Maulānā accepted the gift solely to make Hadrat Wālā happy although his own heart was not keen on accepting it.

Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad's Statement

Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib Sahāranpūrī Muhājir Madanī *rahimahullāh* made the following statement about Hadrat Wālā to his attendant: "I had love for him from the time he did not even know me." In short, Hadrat Wālā was beloved and adored by the pious elders since childhood, and traces of his acceptance in Allāh's court were visible from a young age.

Acceptance In Allāh's Sight

The following is also noteworthy: Hadrat Wālā's foster mother with whom he spent his childhood said to him [later on in life]: "I noticed this in your very childhood: Whenever you had to go on a journey, it would certainly be cloudy and the journey would be covered very comfortably."

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[1] Khulafā' of the same shaykh are known as Pīr Bhāis.

EDUCATION

Memorizing The Qur'ān

Hadrat Wālā memorized a major portion of the Qur'ān under Hāfiz Husayn ʿAlī Sāhib Marhūm who was originally from Delhi but had settled down in Meerut. Hadrat Wālā memorized the beginning chapters under Ākhūnjī Sāhib who was a resident of Khatūlī, district Meerut. He then completed it under Hāfiz Husayn ʿAlī Sāhib.

Persian

He studied the most elementary Persian under several teachers in Meerut but cannot recall their names now. He then studied the intermediary Persian books under Hadrat Maulānā Fath Muhammad Sāhib in Thānah Bhawan, and the higher books up to and including *Abul Fadl* under his maternal uncle, Wājid ʿAlī Sāhib. The latter was an expert in Persian literature. Hadrat Wālā proceeded to Deoband to study Arabic. He studied the remaining Persian books under Maulānā Manfaʿat ʿAlī Sāhib Deobandī. The remaining books were *Panj Riqʿah, Qasā'id ʿUrfī* and *Sikandar Nāmah.*

Expertise In Persian

Hadrat Wālā has full mastery over the Persian language. He can speak and write it, and can also compose poetry and prose. During his student days he fell ill with scabies and took leave from the madrasah to go home. In order to occupy himself, he wrote *Mathnawī Zer-o-Bumm.* He was only eighteen years old at the time.

Arabic

Hadrat Wālā's entire studies of the Arabic language were undertaken in Deoband and, by Allāh's grace, he completed all the books by the age of nineteen or twenty. He lived in Deoband for five years as a student. He had taken admission towards the end of Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1295 A.H. and completed in the beginning of 1301 A.H.

He had studied the elementary Arabic books in Thānah Bhawan under Hadrat Maulānā Fath Muhammad Sāhib. On

reaching Deoband, he commenced studying *Mishkāt Sharīf, Mukhtasar al-Maʿānī* and *Mullā Hasan*. His father had decided to select him for Islamic studies from when Hadrat Wālā had not even started wearing a trouser. In like manner, he had selected his younger brother for Western education from that young age. Hadrat Wālā's father must have gauged each one's affinities and inclinations. He was a very wise man. Although he was occupied with worldly activities, he adhered strictly to salāh, fasting and recitation of the Qur'ān, and showed full enthusiasm in Hadrat Wālā's Islamic education.

Father's Sincerity

Hadrat Wālā's foster mother said to the father on one occasion: "You have selected your younger son for Western education. Very well, he will be able to earn a living. But the elder one is studying Arabic; what will he eat, how will he earn a living? Your properties will be distributed among your inheritors and they will not suffice." Hadrat Wālā's father vehemently disapproved of what she said. Although he always respected her, he went into a rage and said: "Bhābhī Sāhibah! You want to know how he will earn a living by studying Arabic!? By Allāh, those whom you consider to be wealthy and able to earn a living will fall at his feet, while he will not even turn an eye to their riches. You have really grieved me by what you said."

After quoting this incident, Hadrat Wālā used to say: "If a Sufi had made this statement, people today would have considered it to be his supernatural feat. My heart always gushes forth with supplications for my father. I ask Allāh *taʿālā* to cool his grave. He did a great favour to me. It was because of him that I learnt these few letters which are benefiting me. If not, I do not know what I would have turned out to be. Although I did not really learn anything, my brother constantly expresses remorse and says: 'Why did my father not direct me towards Islamic education as well?' All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, I did not even have a single whispering of why my father did not direct me towards Western education."

From the above we can gauge the extent of enthusiasm and sincerity with which Hadrat Wālā's father got him to study Arabic and Islamic studies. What confidence and noble thoughts he had about Allāh *taʿālā*. It was solely through his good thoughts and genuine intention that Allāh *taʿālā* caused

his prediction to unfold to the letter. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Two Childhood Dreams

I feel I should briefly relate two dreams which Hadrat Wālā had during his childhood. The gist of one dream is that two people, a pious personality and a worldly ruler, wrote separate letters to him and both of them said: "We conferred honour to you." On one, the seal of Rasūlullāh's blessed name was stamped on the four corners and was clearly distinguished. The words of the other seal were not legible. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* interpreted the dream as follows: "Inshā Allāh, you will receive honour of Dīn and of this world as well."

In the second dream, Hadrat Wālā saw a large pond from which silver was gushing forth like from a fountain and was following him. Maulānā interpreted it as follows: "Inshā Allāh, the world will follow you but you will not turn towards it."

Good Fortune

Hadrat Wālā's father used to say: "This boy seems to be very fortunate because on every function of his, Allāh *taʿālā* gave me so much that I could spend with all my heart." On the occasion of Hadrat Wālā's marriage, not only did he distribute paisa (coins) but also rupees. Everyone spoke about it. His father also invited the people of the town. Moreover, no matter how much Hadrat Wālā asked him for, he would give without any hesitation. Whereas, when it came to giving his younger brother, Munshī Akbar ʿAlī, he would count how much he gave and also take a counting from him. When the latter complained to the father, he said: "I feel sorry for him. Whatever he takes from me will be only for as long as I live. Remember this after I pass away, he will remain totally aloof from all wealth and possessions." Subsequently, Hadrat Wālā remained totally aloof from doubtful wealth. Instead of taking the remaining agricultural land, he took some cash which was spent in the construction of a house, and some was spent for performing his second hajj. Eventually, he even withdrew himself from the agricultural land. His father had ascertained his temperament since childhood. He was a man of great wisdom and foresight.

A Worthy Son

Hadrat Wālā used to explain many rulings with regard to the lawful and the prohibited to his father in a respectful manner. On one occasion Hadrat Wālā wrote to him stating the impermissibility of mortgaging one's property. His father happened to meet a Hindu acquaintance and said to him in a tone which smacked of a complaint: "I got my one son to study Arabic, and now he reprimands me over every matter. He says this is against the Sharī'ah and that is impermissible, and is now advising me to give up mortgages." On hearing this, the Hindu said: "Munshījī! This is something to be happy about. It seems you have a very worthy son; he desires your wellbeing. Had you taught him astronomy, he would have spoken to you about auspicious omens. Had you taught him law, he would speak to you about the law. Had you taught him medicine, he would have informed you of what is harmful and what is beneficial. You got him to study Dīn so it is inevitable that he tells you matters related to Dīn. Be grateful, he is a very worthy son; he is your well-wisher. He wants to save you from the punishment of the Hereafter. You ought to be pleased over the fact that whatever you are spending for his studies is being spent in the proper manner and proper place."

Preservation Of Time

Hadrat Wālā did not intermingle with anyone during his student days. He would either be occupied in his studies, or, if he got the opportunity, he would sit in the company of his special teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

One day, the Maulānā was gone somewhere and Hadrat Wālā had some free time. So instead of passing it in futile activities, he presented himself before one of his other teachers, Maulānā Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib. The Maulānā asked: "What brought you here?" Hadrat Wālā replied plainly and honestly: "Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib is gone out today, so I came to spend time with you." Hadrat Wālā had a few distant relatives in Deoband, but he would not go to meet them.

In the beginning, some of his relatives insisted on him to join them in their meals which were always ready and prepared, there was no need for him to prepare his own food. Hadrat Wālā refused to go until he obtained permission from his

father. When he wrote to his father in this regard, he replied with a severe scolding: "Did you go there [Deoband] to make relatives or to study? Don't you dare go to any of your relatives." Hadrat Wālā gave up intermingling with them and spent his entire student life in this way.

Hadrat Wālā says: "All praise is due to Allāh, just as I went their unblemished, I left there unblemished after five years. Once I completed my studies, I went and met all my relatives and also accepted their invitations. Before this, I did not establish any contact with anyone – not with my relatives, not with students and not with any of the residents of the town. If anyone tried to interact and intermingle with me, I responded with inattentiveness. So much so, people generally considered me to be snobbish. But this was not the case. The fact of the matter was that I abhorred wasting my time in futilities."

Following A Strict Routine

This was a distinguishing quality of Hadrat Wālā which commenced very early in his life and continues to this day. It was this quality which enabled him to complete his studies so quickly, always kept him away from evil company and enabled him to write so many books. There are very few people in the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* who possessed this quality. His following a strict routine is most astonishing. He is like a machine which works continuously and does not stop at any time. Obviously, a person who has so many occupations cannot function without a strict routine and time-table. A person can only follow a strict routine if he is not overpowered by etiquette and politeness, and he carries out every task at its time and place.

Let alone with outsiders, look at how he followed his routine in the following incident. His teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh*, came as a guest to Hadrat Wālā's place. He made all arrangements to make him feel comfortable. When the time for Hadrat Wālā 's writing work came, he respectfully said to his teacher: "Hadrat, I normally do a bit of writing at this time. If Hadrat permits me, I will do some writing and come back to you." Hadrat Maulānā replied: "You may most certainly go and write. Never neglect your work for my sake." Hadrat Wālā did this despite not having any inclination to do any writing work on that day. But he did not permit himself to leave out that work or else it could result in

absence of blessings. He went and did a little writing and returned.

Abstaining From Futilities

Hadrat Wālā's intelligence, sharpness of mind and strong memory were well known among all the students. The students were invited to eat mangoes. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were also present. When a few mangoes were left, Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib gauged that the students will want to fling the pits and peels at each other. So he got up intentionally from the courtyard [to allow them to play their game] and proceeded to his class. The students then thoroughly enjoyed themselves flinging the pits and peels at each other. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, due to his absolute humility and informality, joined in.

In the meantime, when Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib was proceeding towards his classroom, Hadrat Wālā considered it to be a golden opportunity and accompanied him. When the students began making too much of mischief, Hadrat Maulānā went and stood by the class door. He commanded extreme awe, so the courtyard was cleared within seconds, and all the students fled and began hiding here and there. Hadrat Maulānā then returned to his house, and Maulānā also left the class and returned to his room. Later on, some students tried to throw juice or water on Hadrat Wālā but he locked his room door. His focus on his studies can be gauged from this incident. In short, he did not waste any of his time in futile activities or bad company during his student days. He remained fully occupied in his fundamental objective of acquiring knowledge.

Teachers' Opinions

Hadrat Wālā was most enthusiastic about the acquisition of knowledge to the extent that he would read some of the non-prescribed books to some of his teachers while they were performing wudū' and getting ready for salāh. All his teachers paid special attention to him and they had good opinions of him. When Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* came to Deoband to take the students' exams and attend the qualification ceremony, Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib

rahimahullāh made special mention of Hadrat Wālā's intelligence and sharp mind. When Maulānā Gangohī heard these praises, he began posing difficult questions to Hadrat Wālā and was most satisfied with his answers.

Maulānā Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib tested Hadrat Wālā on the book *Sikandar Nāmah* and asked him the meaning of a poem. Hadrat Wālā did not remember the meaning as explained by his teacher so he gave his own explanation. The Maulānā asked him: "Can it have any other meaning?" Hadrat Wālā provided another explanation. The Maulānā asked again: "Can it have any other meaning?" Hadrat Wālā provided a third explanation. The Maulānā said: "None of your explanations are correct, but I will give you marks for your intelligence." He said this although he himself was an extremely intelligent personality, to the extent that Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib – the chief of all intellectuals – used to say with regard to him: "If Euclid[1] was very intelligent, he would have been as intelligent as him [Maulānā Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib] and not more intelligent than him." The Maulānā was an expert in maths although he did not study it under anyone. He acquired it through self study.

In short, the testimony of these intellectuals in favour of Hadrat Wālā's intelligence is a very weighty testimony. The gist of all that we said is that Hadrat Wālā surpassed all his classmates as a student.

Quick-Wittedness

Hadrat Wālā's level of quick-wittedness, dexterity, astuteness, discernment and mastery in logic was so high that when any person belonging to any sect or religion came to Deoband to have a debate, Hadrat Wālā would go there immediately and defeat the person.

He went to debate an English priest. When Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib came to know about it, he felt that Hadrat Wālā was quite young and might get intimidated. So he also went with a view to helping Hadrat Wālā. But Hadrat Wālā silenced the Englishman within a few minutes. When the Englishman's madam realized he was defeated, she sent a note to him asking him to leave. So he offered the excuse to Hadrat

[1] A Greek mathematician.

Wālā that his madam was summoning him, and left immediately never to return to Deoband.

Acumen In Debating

Hadrat Wālā says: "The enthusiasm which I had for debating in my young days is now replaced by as much aversion for it because of its harms." He had debates with Christians, Aryans, Shīʿas and Ghayr Muqallids during his student days. Even today, when Maulānā Sayyid Murtadā Hasan Sāhib – the chief of all debaters – hears Hadrat Wālā's logical and coherent speeches, he is left astounded. He says: "Hadrat Wālā is so insightful in the art of debating that even the greatest debaters cannot compare with him."

We witness this on a daily basis when very senior and articulate debaters come to discuss extremely complex issues with him. Hadrat Wālā is able to silence them by Allāh's help. The beauty in all this is that he does not shift an inch from the principles of debating and never hesitates in the least in accepting the truth. Despite his total affinity with debating, he always remains aloof from it because the majority of present day debaters have impure motives. This is why there is no benefit in debating. Instead, it causes more harm.

It habituates a person into engaging in pointless discussions and becoming obstinate. The capability of identifying the facts is destroyed. Hadrat Wālā goes into detail in speaking about these evils which are found in the debaters of today. He compares it to the appealing and admonitory stories of the debaters of the past whose aim was to fathom and establish the truth.

Moderation

Although Hadrat Wālā was very proficient in the rational sciences, he always disliked them in comparison to the traditional sciences. Consequently, when he used to commence philosophy lessons, then instead of commencing with *Bismillāhir Rahmāni Rahīm*, he would commence with *Aʿūdhu billāhi minash shaytānir rajīm* (I seek refuge from the accursed Satan). I recall a statement of Hadrat Wālā at this point. He said: "All praise is due to Allāh, I never permit my disposition to overpower my intellect, and never permit my intellect to overpower the Sharīʿah."

Hadrat Wālā was so proficient in the rational sciences that he used to read major sections of difficult books like *Sidrā* and *Shams Bāzighah* without a translation, and even the most difficult issues appeared like smooth flowing water. Those who are experts in the rational sciences generally remain devoted to this field. But Allāh *taʿālā* placed absolute moderation in Hadrat Wālā's disposition enabling him to accord every single thing the rank which it deserved. Thus, despite his expertise in the rational sciences, he considered them to be merely tools for the understanding of religious sciences. Any person observing his actions, statements and writings with a deep and impartial eye will clearly notice the qualities of moderation and preservation of ranks in Hadrat Wālā. Obviously, a person who studies his life with the spectacles of obstinacy, ignorance or customs will not see it. The following couplet will apply to him:

> It is no fault of the sun if a blind person cannot see during the day.

The quality of moderation is a distinguished quality which is conferred on a special servant after many centuries. A Hakīm al-Ummah and Muhiyy as-Sunnah (specialist physician of the ummah and reviver of the Sunnah) is honoured with this quality. It is this very quality which becomes a cause of opposition to such personalities and their slandering. How can a person who wipes out fanatical and zealous customs, uproots innovations, removes Muslims from the immoderate way, and brings them to the path of moderation – or in other words, to the straight path – ever remain protected from opposition and slander!? He is more prepared to give up his own benefits, where will he bother about their slanders?!

> Although the intelligent ones may consider it to be slander, we do not desire name and fame.

Humbleness

Hadrat Wālā himself says about his mastery in logic: "All praise is due to Allāh I am an expert in logic. Why should I not say the truth when I am neither humble nor proud? Why should I deny something which Allāh conferred to me? It is a bestowal from Allāh *taʿālā*, it is not my achievement. In fact, I do not even consider it to be an excellence. Through the blessings of serving the pious personalities, I have fully understood that:

Energizing one's intellect and disposition is not the way to success. The kindness of the Master cannot be achieved without humility."

Comprehensiveness

Hadrat Wālā also said: "In most cases, my method of rectification is to overpower a person in whatever field he claims to be a master of. I do this provided that field is the objective. I then have the right to make him subservient to me in matters of rectification. In this way, the person too does not consider it demeaning to follow me, he does not have the right to dispute with me, and he does not have any doubts about my teachings and instructions."

This demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's comprehensive knowledge of various sciences and branches of knowledge. This is accepted by all – his supporters and his enemies. No one denies it. I mentioned this by the way. I now return to my objective.

Hadrat Wālā had a special affinity with Sufism and books on Sufism during his student days. A few incidents in this regard will be related in the chapter on bay'ah and spiritual bestowals.

Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb's Prediction

Hadrat Wālā's qualification ceremony[1] was conducted by the blessed hands of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* in 1300 A.H. A huge and elaborate function was organized for this occasion. When Hadrat Wālā heard about the impending qualification ceremony, he took his classmates and went to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib and said: "Hadrat, we have heard that a qualification ceremony is going to be held and we will receive qualification certificates, whereas we are most certainly not eligible to receive all this. This ceremony should be cancelled or else the Madrasah will be maligned for conferring certificates to such unworthy students as us."

The Maulānā responded with full emotion: "You are wrong in thinking in this way. Your teachers are present among you, this is why you do not consider yourself to be something. And you ought to think in this manner. You will only ascertain your true worth when you leave here and go out into the world. No

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[1] Known as a dastār bandī. A turban is tied around the qualifying student's head.

matter where you go, you alone will be the shining stars. The rest of the field is bare, do not worry."

After quoting the above statement, Hadrat Wālā says: "It is really through the blessings of Hadrat Maulānā's prediction that no matter where I had to live, the senior 'ulamā' of that place looked up to me with respect, and all sections of the community gave me preference over others." This is the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

I just recalled another prediction of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. The Maulānā had given Hadrat Wālā the responsibility of replying to fatwās when he was still a student. On one occasion, he received a very lengthy question, and he too provided a very lengthy, detailed and fully-referenced reply. After completing it, he gave it to Maulānā to check. He read the entire question and answer, and placed his signature of approval on it. But at the same time, he said to Hadrat Wālā: "It seems you have a lot of time on your hands. I would like to see the time when heaps of letters will be placed before you and how you will give such lengthy replies."

Eventually this is exactly what happened. Heaps upon heaps of letters are before Hadrat Wālā on a daily basis. He provides extremely short but most comprehensive replies which are absolutely sufficient and encompass all angles of the question. They are manifestations of the Arabic idiom which translates as: "A mere indication suffices an intelligent person."

For example, Hadrat Wālā will pose an admonitory question through which the answer will be understood automatically. This technique of replying is most beneficial for the seeker and has the greatest impact on his mind. He answers lengthy confusing questions with absolute ease and comprehensiveness in a few lines. He completes replying to each day's post on the same day. He is very particular in this regard and, by Allāh's grace, never lags behind. This despite the fact that he gets very little time to reply to the post, especially nowadays when the post reaches him quite late because of the change of times in the railway postal system.

The gist of this chapter in the light of the above incidents and situations is that just as Hadrat Wālā is Ashraf al-'Ulamā' (the noblest of 'ulamā') in today's times, through the grace of Allāh

taʿālā, he was the Ashraf aṯ-Ṯalabah (the noblest of students) during his student days.

HONOURABLE TEACHERS

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb

Allāh *taʿālā* blessed Hadrat Wālā with teachers who were the Ghazzālīs and Rāzīs of their time. The most distinguished personality from among them was Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib. Apart from being an expert in every science, he was a spiritual master and a man of the internal sciences. Hadrat Wālā acquired immense blessings and obtained most astonishing and unique sciences from him. He relates most of the Maulānā's statements, life situations and knowledge with relish. He says this quite often: "It was not just a class lesson, it was a special focus from him. Imagine, he is delivering a tafsīr lesson, explaining the meanings of the verses, while tears are flowing from his eyes."

Other Teachers

Some of his other teachers were Maulānā Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib, Janāb Mullā Mahmūd Sāhib, Maulānā ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib *rahimahumullāh*. His primary and elementary teachers were mentioned in the previous chapter.

Hadrat Qārī Muhammad Abdullāh Muhājir Makkī

Hadrat Wālā studied the modes of Qur'ān recitation under the world-renown Janāb Qārī Muhammad ʿAbdullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* while in Makkah Mukarramah. He was considered to be an expert in this field even by the distinguished readers of the Arab world. Hadrat Wālā's constant practising under him created a unique similarity in his recitation with that of his famous teacher. When Qārī Sāhib used to teach Hadrat Wālā in the upper storey of Madrasah Saulatiyah [in Makkah], those who were passing by downstairs could not distinguish between the teacher and the student. From this we can gauge Hadrat Wālā's power of absorption. This was the real secret behind Hadrat Wālā absorbing the most excellences from his honourable teachers. Qārī Sāhib displayed immense affection towards Hadrat Wālā and also gave him a few books on the subject of recitation to teach to

the students of his madrasah so that he could acquire some affinity with teaching this subject.

Hadrat Wālā relates: "In the beginning I thought I was a very good reader. So in order to display my proficiency to Qārī Sāhib, I said to him: 'Before you can start teaching me, listen to one section of my recitation so that you can gauge the extent of my weakness. You can then remove whatever weakness you find in me.' Whereas this was not my intention. Rather it was my self which was dictating to me. Qārī Sāhib listened to one section, and I asked him: 'What do you think?' he was very kind to me when he said: 'There is a slight weakness, but – Allāh willing – it will be removed very quickly.' Only when I started practising under him did I realize that I knew nothing in this field. I felt very ashamed at having recited to him."

Hadrat Wālā's Unique Qur'ān Recitation

Hadrat Wālā constantly relates an extremely useful principle of Qārī Sāhib. He says: "No attention whatsoever should be directed to the style of recitation. One's entire focus should be directed at correcting the pronunciation of letters. Whatever style of recitation develops after correcting the pronunciation of letters will certainly be admirable." We now see that although a long time has passed since Hadrat Wālā practised under Qārī Sāhib and he also gave up that style of reading, no matter what style he adopts, it is always appealing and the people of the heart thoroughly enjoy it. So much so, a live-hearted and sound-minded philosopher was very impressed and requested Hadrat Wālā to permit him to record it on a gramophone. But because it was not permitted by the Sharī'ah, he did not allow him.

When Hadrat Wālā went to Pānīpat, the expert readers who were proud about the correctness of their pronunciation were very impressed by Hadrat Wālā's excellent pronunciation. Maulānā 'Ayn al-Qudāt Sāhib established a distinguished madrasah for the recitation of the Qur'ān in Lucknow which is existing to this day. Coincidentally, he heard Hadrat Wālā's recitation in the fajr salāh. He was most impressed and requested that he would like to listen to Hadrat Wālā reading the Qur'ān separately. He acceded to his request, went personally to him, and read three sections to him so that he may be satisfied. The Maulānā enjoyed the recitation thoroughly.

I recall a pious person's words which he said directly to me: "Maulānā [Hadrat Wālā] does not merely read the Qur'ān, he slaughters it." On certain occasions, this is what is really experienced by the listeners. For example, in the lengthy recitation of the fajr salāh, some soft-hearted followers are overcome by crying.

Love And Respect For Teachers

Allāh *taʿālā* had bestowed Hadrat Wālā with expert teachers in every field, all of whom were unparalleled in their respective fields. The attention and consideration which they accorded to him were not directed to any other student. Hadrat Wālā too had a bond with them which was not enjoyed by anyone else. We can say that he had intense love for them. He says: "I did not strive excessively in my studies. Whatever Allāh *taʿālā* conferred to me was by virtue of my respectful and loving relationship with my teachers and elders. All praise is due to Allāh, I can say that I did not displease any of my elders for a single minute. I do not think anyone today has as much respect as I have in my heart for my elders." Those who listen to Hadrat Wālā's statements know fully well that he is an embodiment of respect. As the saying goes: "The entire path of love is nothing but respect." It is solely through this respect for the elders that Hadrat Wālā received these external and internal treasures. Maulānā Rūmī says:

> These skies were illuminated by virtue of respect.
> The angels and sinless are pure solely because of respect.

The Love And Attention Of Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was in the habit of explaining many sciences and facts to Hadrat Wālā because he knew that the latter had a special interest in them. He had an affinity with truths, understood intricate matters and valued them.

A person of little understanding asked the Maulānā: "A woman who experiences menses does not have to make up for her missed salāhs but she has to make up for her missed fasts. What is the reason for this?" He replied: "The reason is that if you do not act on this ruling you will be struck so many times with a shoe that you will not find a single sore on your head."

When Hadrat Wālā posed the same question to him on another occasion, he provided a very intricate answer. The first person would not have understood this answer, so he was given the previous reply. Maulānā Rūmī says:

> A person who speaks a language which is alien to us is considered to be voiceless even if he speaks in a hundred different voices.

Preserving The Sciences Of His Teachers

Hadrat Wālā constantly relates and quotes the sciences, lofty conditions and unique researches of his teachers. He relates them with such emotion that the listeners go into an ecstasy and a sample of the pious predecessors is presented to them. After relating their merits, Hadrat Wālā would often follow it with the following couplet:

أولئك ابائي فجئني بمثلهم – إذا جمعتنا يا جرير المجامع

O Jarīr! When you bring us together in large assemblies, then present to us people as great as my forefathers.

When we hear Hadrat Wālā relating their merits and excellences, we simultaneously witness the separate traits and peculiarities of those personalities collectively in Hadrat Wālā. The following couplet applies:

ليس على الله بمستنكر – أن يجمع العالم في واحد

It is not difficult for Allāh to gather the entire world in a single person.

Hadrat Wālā's power of absorption is clearly gauged from the manner in which he relates their merits. When Hadrat Wālā saw his elders at Deoband wearing narrow pants, he gave up wearing the broad pants which he was accustomed to. From his student days he wore simple clothes and led a very simple life. He came to his father during one of the holidays. He had a shawl wrapped around him in an informal way, not in the proper usual manner where the two ends are equal in length, one is not hanging lower than the other, and so on. When his father saw him like this he reprimanded him saying: "Miyā! You do not even know how to wrap a shawl around you!?" Although Hadrat Wālā really respected his father and was also scared of him, he was very affected by his words and responded

spontaneously: "Hadrat! If it was your sole objective to teach me how to wear a shawl, you should not have bothered to send me to Deoband Madrasah because no one there knows how to wear a shawl. They are all slapdash like this."

His father was short-tempered but he remained silent and never reprimanded Hadrat Wālā on such matters again. He was an extremely intelligent and wise man, he understood the reality. Hadrat Wālā expresses a lot of sorrow over the fastidiousness and meticulousness of today's students as regards their clothing and appearance. He says: "This is proof that they do not have high aspirations and no desire for knowledge, or else they would have never paid any attention to such base and trivial matters."

When Hadrat Wālā was still a student at Deoband, Janāb Hāfiz Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Sāhib who held the pious elders in high regard and who was pledged to Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib came to visit Maulānā Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib. He was astonished when he saw the appearance and dressing of Hadrat Wālā, and his studious nature. He remarked to Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib: "Hadrat, you have made the boys totally immersed in their shaykhs."

In short, Hadrat Wālā was extremely enthusiastic about the excellences and blessings of his teachers and elders, and made it his main preoccupation. We see the results of it today: He is a combination of the unparalleled excellences by virtue of the attention and focus of the elders. This is the bounty of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

TEACHING

Madrasah Fayd Ām, Kānpūr

When Hadrat Wālā completed his studies, he began teaching in Kānpūr for a period of fourteen years. During this time, the people of Kānpūr benefited greatly from his excellent admonitions and beneficial writings. In addition to this, he had taken the responsibility of issuing fatwās, the copies of which were preserved in the Madrasah. This resulted in a huge collection of his fatwās.

The background to Hadrat Wālā going to Kānpūr is as follows: Madrasah Fayd ʿĀm was the oldest Islamic centre of learning in Kānpūr. Its head teacher, Maulānā Ahmad Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, a famous scholar and expert in the rational sciences, became angry with the authorities over some matter, left the Madrasah, and established another one by the name of Dār al-ʿUlūm. Because of his popularity among the students, no one had the courage to take his place, and no one was prepared to go there.

However, Hadrat Wālā did not have any knowledge of all this. When he heard that the Madrasah needed a teacher, he left without any hesitation towards the end of Safar 1301 A.H. after obtaining his father's permission and instructions from his honourable teachers. He commenced his duties of teaching once he reached there. His monthly salary was just twenty five rupees. This was not a very low salary for those days, but bearing in mind Hadrat Wālā's capabilities and his father's affluence, the salary was really nothing. Despite this, he considered it to be a very high salary because, he says: "Whenever I used to think about my student days, I considered ten rupees at the most to be sufficient for the fulfilment of my monthly needs. Five rupees for my self and five rupees for my house. I never thought of a higher salary and never considered myself eligible for more."

Popularity In Kānpūr

Although Hadrat Wālā was absolutely young and still "green", he became popular very quickly among the teachers and the residents of Kānpūr; and was generally liked by them. In fact,

even Maulānā Ahmad Hasan Sāhib received him warmly and respectfully.

Immediately after qualifying, Hadrat Wālā was given the major books to teach. He never had the experience of teaching before, and his studies too were not undertaken with full focus in this direction. This is why he became quite perturbed. He used to say to himself: "O Allāh! How will I be able to teach these books?" He then supplicated to Allāh *ta'ālā* and experienced no difficulties once he began teaching. By Allāh's grace, he taught with absolute ease. Periodically he would receive consolation and encouragement from the unseen. Two of his dreams are quoted in his own words from *Asdaq ar-Ru'yā*:

1. When I commenced teaching Hadīth, I dreamt of my teacher Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. A group of students studying *Bukhārī Sharīf* was sitting in front of me, one copy was placed before me, and I was looking in the book and conducting my lesson. My respected teacher entered, and I think he had a copy of *Bukhārī* in his hand as well. As I was teaching and explaining, he was approving whatever I was saying.

2. There is a place like the small printing press of Janāb 'Abd ar-Rahmān Khān Sāhib, the founder of Madrasah Jāmi' al-'Ulūm Kānpūr. Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās *radiyallāhu 'anhu* is standing at its well and I am standing close by. After seeing this dream, I was convinced of my affinity with the science of tafsīr.

Glad tidings of affinity with the science of tafsīr were also given by Hadrat Wālā's shaykh and mentor [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*] during Hadrat Wālā's stay in Makkah Mu'azzamah. This will be related later on.

Resignation From Madrasah Fayd Ām

Hadrat Wālā became distressed after working at Madrasah Fayd 'Ām for three or four months. A major reason for this was that he abstained from announcing the need for donations [for the Madrasah] in his lectures. He had a natural aversion to this practice which is still found in him to this day. He considered it to be against religious self-respect, and if one was compelled into making a special announcement for it, he considered it to be impermissible. In short, Hadrat Wālā had the same attitude and stance as he has today.

The committee members of the Madrasah discussed the matter among themselves and complained about it. Someone informed Hadrat Wālā about it. He was most disturbed and replied: "If I have to give a talk solely for collecting funds, then I rather do the collections for my own self." He added: "This is not my work; it is actually the responsibility of the committee members. My work is to teach." He related this story as well: "If the 'ulamā' are instructed to teach and to collect funds also, then it will be just like how King Akbar was overjoyed by a jester so he gave him one of the royal elephants as a gift. Now how will this jester be able to afford to feed this elephant? He eventually suspended a drum from its neck and left it on the King's road from where the King's conveyance passes. When the King saw the royal elephant wandering about like this, he summoned for the jester and asked him the reason. He replied: 'O King! If I did not do this what else could I have done? If I were to keep it tied at my house, from where would I obtain food for it? I have no money. I end up spending whatever I earn daily. When I could find no alternative, I tied a drum to its neck and said: 'Go around singing and dancing like me, earn a living and eat from your earnings as I do.'"

"So this is what you people want us to do. We must teach and we must go around collecting donations so that we can receive a salary." Although this made absolute sense, the committee members created an uproar about it among themselves. Hadrat Wālā was most displeased and handed in his resignation. They came and apologized but he refused to stay because he felt that they were unappreciative and it would be difficult to work with such people.

Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "Those were my young days when a person is normally over enthusiastic. The actual reason was that employment was against my temperament. When I wrote about my complaints to my father, he provided explanations for each of the points which the committee members had said and wrote: 'Remain there for now, it is not appropriate to be hasty in resigning. Employment is certainly not our objective because Allāh *ta'ālā* has provided us with everything. The only reason why I permitted you to go there was because your are recently qualified, the books are still fresh in your mind, and they will become more consolidated through teaching. If you give up being an employee, your teaching will terminate totally and you will forget whatever you

studied. You will not be able to teach without being imposed to, and if you remain in the Madrasah, it will impose on you to teach.'"

But Hadrat Wālā was already broken hearted so he severed ties from Madrasah Fayd ʿĀm and made arrangements to return home.

Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī

Before Hadrat Wālā could depart, he felt he ought to go to meet Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī because he may not get an opportunity of coming to this area again. Subsequently, he went to visit him.

A New Madrasah Is Established

While Hadrat Wālā departed, Janāb ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Khān Sāhib and Hājī Kifāyatullāh Sāhib, both of whom had a lot of faith and confidence in Hadrat Wālā, were having mutual discussions about him. They said in their discussions: "We will not be able to obtain the services of another scholar like him and he should not be allowed to leave. A separate madrasah ought to be opened for him because most of the madāris in the city concentrate on the rational sciences. There is a dire need for a madrasah which has the full syllabus for Islamic studies."

The two made arrangements for Hadrat Wālā's monthly salary of 25 rupees, 20 of which will be arranged by Khān Sāhib and five by Hājī Sāhib. Later on, they also went around collecting donations but Hadrat Wālā never took this responsibility. When he returned from Ganj Murādābād, the two convinced him to remain. He began conducting lessons in the Jāmiʿ Musjid of Tipkāpūr district and a new madrasah was thus established. Because this madrasah combined the rational and traditional sciences, and it was housed in the Jāmiʿ Musjid, Hadrat Wālā named it Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm (combiner of several sciences). By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, it exists to this day. In the beginning, Hadrat Wālā used to be extremely shy to teach because he was absolutely young and still inexperienced. Consequently, the student number was very small for several years. But once his beard became longer, students began arriving in large numbers.

Love For Him

Hadrat Wālā relates: “I was very young when I went to Kānpūr, but all praise is due to Allāh, the people loved me from the very beginning and accorded me a lot of respect. Allāh *taʿālā* had placed love in the hearts of everyone – friends and foes. Those who were foes also loved me even though they did not have confidence in me. And I value love more than anything else because when there is love, there is informality and one is able to have a balanced and equal relationship. This brings about much comfort. On the other hand, if a person has confidence in me, it creates a burden on my heart and I have to do things to ensure that the confidence is not lost or does not waver. As for love, it remains even if the person does not have confidence in you.”

Hadrat Wālā adds: “The people of Kānpūr treated me with so much of love, respect and hospitality that I even forgot my hometown and I felt more at home in Kānpūr than I did in my hometown. I loved the place so much that instead of engraving my name on my utensils, I engraved the words “Kānpūr”. Even now when I look at those utensils I think of Kānpūr. Had it not been for Hadrat Hājī Sāhib’s indication, I would have not left Kānpūr for the rest of my life. The fact of the matter is that the popularity which I got was because of the people of Kānpūr. After all, I was not of such a level nor am I even now. I still love the people of Kānpūr immensely and I am indebted to them. By Allāh’s will, their hearts were generally so attracted to me that even differences in creed did not become obstacles.”

People Of Opposing Beliefs Loved Him

In the beginning, Hadrat Wālā coincidentally attended a maulūd and did not stand up[1] because it was not his mentor’s practice. He was the only person in the entire gathering who remained seated. All the others were standing because it was their belief and practice. One of Hadrat Wālā’s students said to him in Arabic that it is not appropriate to remain seated at present. He did not pay heed and said:

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[1] Maulūd refers to the practice of celebrating the birth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The “standing up” refers to the practice of standing up when sending salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

Obedience to the creation is not permitted if it involves disobedience to the Creator.

The student also remained seated. Later on, they learnt that on such occasions in the past, many people were beaten for not standing up because those who practised this were most fanatical. But no one had the courage to say a word to Hadrat Wālā because they generally loved and respected him. Yes, some of them cast side glances towards him. In fact, the sons of ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Khān Sāhib and a few other influential people who held such beliefs said: "Had we known that Maulānā did not stand up, we too would not have stood up." From this we can gauge how beloved Hadrat Wālā was to them in the sense that they were prepared to act against their beliefs because of him.

Travelling To Delhi To Study Medicine

After some time, Hadrat Wālā decided to continue teaching without taking a salary. Although, based on necessity, the latter jurists passed a verdict of permissibility to accept a wage for teaching Islamic subjects, Hadrat Wālā did not approve of it. While he was employed at Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm, he felt he should go to Hakīm ʿAbd al-Majīd Sāhib Dehlawī, study medicine under him, and then earn a living from opening a clinic while teaching Dīn solely for Allāh's sake.

He wrote to his father in this regard. He happily gave permission, and because he loved Hadrat Wālā immensely, he set aside the income from one of his villages, Gadā-e-Khīrah, for his expenses. Hadrat Wālā proceeded to Delhi and started studying medicine. But the people of Kānpūr expressed their severe need for him in the madrasah and insisted on him to return. To add to this, Janāb Maulwī Hakīm Jamīl ad-Dīn Sāhib Ghāzīpūrī who had been Hadrat Wālā's classmate in Deoband stressed on him never to get involved in medicine because personal experience told him that it is impossible to serve Dīn while running a clinic.

Hadrat Wālā decided to return but Hakīm ʿAbd al-Majīd Sāhib, despite having a very independent disposition began showing intense affection and kindness towards him although he was there for only 15 days. Hadrat Wālā considered it discourteous

and impolite to leave of his own accord. So he said to those who had come to call him back to Kānpūr: "I am prepared to return if Hakīm Sāhib permits." When the latter was asked, he gave his permission by saying: "If he does not want to progress, he has the choice of returning if he so wishes." Hadrat Wālā returned to Kānpūr and continued teaching as he had been.

Hadrat Wālā says this time and again: "May Allāh *taʿālā* reward Hakīm Maulwī Jamīl ad-Dīn Sāhib for advising me [not to pursue medicine]. He did a great favour to me."

Although Janāb Hakīm ʿAbd al-Majīd Sāhib was a very senior and well-known personality, he developed a deep bond with Hadrat Wālā. When he eventually returned to Thānah Bhawan, Hakīm Sāhib made an intention of visiting him. A person from Thānah Bhawan was living in Delhi. Hakīm Sāhib asked him the procedures and rules which have to be followed when going to Thānah Bhawan. The person said: "He is your student, there are no rules for you." He said: "No brother, our teacher student relationship is another matter and this path of Sufism is something else. I will follow the same protocol as anyone else." Unfortunately he never got an opportunity of going because he passed away soon thereafter. Look at the level of his humility and sound disposition!

When Hadrat Wālā heard about this after Hakīm Sāhib's demise, he said with genuine regret: "Had I known about this before his demise, I would have went personally to him and said: 'Hadrat! The only rule for you to come to me is that I have come personally to you.'"

The People Of Kānpūr Rejoice Over His Return

The people of Kānpūr were overjoyed by Hadrat Wālā's return, and they seemed to be saying:

> My master has returned to my alley. My water has returned to my stream.

Hadrat Wālā's mentor, Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *quddisa sirruhu,* also expressed his joy in a letter. A section of this letter will be quoted later on.

The Beloved Of The People

Allāh *taʿālā* bestowed Hadrat Wālā with such a unique quality of being well-loved since childhood to the present time that no matter where he went, he was loved by everyone. Even people of other religions were attracted and drawn towards him. There are countless incidents in this regard.

He merely had to turn to a person and say a few words to him and the person's heart will be in Hadrat Wālā's hand. The love which he enjoyed in Kānpūr caused some people to suspect that he was resorting to some magical practices through which he was influencing people. A man who had pledged allegiance to Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* expressed his suspicion that the Maulānā and Hadrat Wālā certainly had some powers of influencing people; this is the only way of explaining the large numbers of people who were thronging around them. This man insisted on Hadrat Wālā to teach him the methodology. Hadrat Wālā blankly denied; in fact, he took an oath that he knows no such practice, it is solely Allāh's grace which is placing people's love for him in their hearts. The man was not convinced and continued persisting. When he refused to accept, Hadrat Wālā taught him the dhikr of *pās anfās*, and told him that this was the greatest practice.

The story of Hazbar Khān

There was an old and uncouth Pathan who enjoyed much respect in the city because he had been a chief at one time. He was now a worker for a chief but his pompous nature was still the same, and he used to scold everyone. He came to Hadrat Wālā during the occasion of the 10th of Muharram and said: "It was the practice of Shāh Salāmatullāh Sāhib to read the shahādat nāmah during the first ten days of Muharram. So you must also read it. If you do not read it, people will suspect that you reject it." Hadrat Wālā said: "It is not permissible to read it because it entails imitation of the Shīʿah." He was offended by Hadrat Wālā's reply and said: "It is so sad that I am telling you something which would be of benefit to you but you are not listening to me." Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is so sad that people who do not possess knowledge are going around and advising the knowledgeable to ask them before proceeding any religious work." The man became angry and left, saying:

"Very well, don't listen to me." He walked a small distance, came back and said: "It is a very difficult situation. First of all you are not listening to what I am saying, and when I want to depart, you are not allowing me. I cannot even lift my legs." He then sought pardon from Hadrat Wālā and regained his composure only after he got his pardon.

The story of Munshī Safdar Husayn

There was a very respectable and highly regarded chief by the name of Munshī Safdar Husayn of Kākaurī in Kānpūr. He was so arrogant that he would never go to meet any person. He would always remain on the third storey of his building and would come down very rarely. He was extremely arrogant and haughty. He had bad thoughts about Hadrat Muʿāwiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and used to make disparaging remarks about him in his assemblies.

Qādī Wasīy ad-Dīn Sāhib who was also a very honourable and distinguished man of the city took Hadrat Wālā to the Munshī and said to him: "You can have your doubts removed by him [referring to Hadrat Wālā]." He said: "My doubts are based on historical incidents, who can solve them?" He then quoted this Hadīth:

من سبّ أصحابي فقد سبّني، ومن سبّني فقد سبّ الله

The person who hurls abuses at my Companions has hurled abuses at me, and the one who hurls abuses at me has hurled abuses at Allāh taʿālā.

He continues: "It is established that Hadrat Muʿāwiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* made disparaging remarks against Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*." Hadrat Wālā replied immediately: "The above Hadīth applies to non-Sahābah. An example of this is of a king who says: 'If anyone looks at my sons [the princes] full in the eye, I will have his eyes removed.' This does not mean that even if the princes fight among themselves then the same punishment will be meted out to them. There maybe some other punishment, but the same punishment will never ever be meted out to them. It therefore means that if any outsider looks at them with sharp eyes, this punishment will be meted out to him."

When the Munshī could find no answer to Hadrat Wālā's argument, he addressed a Hindū Bengali Bābū who was seated

nearby and said: “Look Bābū Sāhib! Our ‘ulamā’ are resorting to their intelligence.” So Hadrat Wālā said – probably in a raised voice – “So what do you want, they must resort to stupidity?” The Munshī was silenced.

Bearing in mind that the Munshī was put to shame in the presence of all who were present and the fact that he was a senior person, Hadrat Wālā – out of his good character - tried to make up for this. This man had some knowledge of ‘amalīyyāt. So in order to remove some of his humiliation, Hadrat Wālā said: “I sleep very little. Teach me some practice to solve my problem.” When this request was made to him, all his shame disappeared, he became overjoyed and said: “Very well, I will write something on a plate and send it to you periodically. You must drink its water.” Some plates were sent to the Munshī, he would write something on them and send one at a time to Hadrat Wālā. His bond with Hadrat Wālā became so strong that he would occasionally have some delicacies prepared and sent to him.

Relationship With People Of The Neighbourhood

Hadrat Wālā relates: “In the course of my stay in Kānpūr, I always lived in Tapkāpūr district because this is where the Madrasah was. Although the people of this district where very carefree and audacious, they were more intelligent than the residents of the other areas. I lived among them all the time, and their relationship with me was always a loving one. The reason for this is that I too was not hard on them on any particular issue. Furthermore, I was never desirous of anything from them. Instead, I used to assist the poor and needy of the area on certain occasions. We experienced famine on one occasion. So to fulfil the rights of my neighbours, I made a collection and distributed grain and clothing to the poor.”

He relates: Some women brought *jalebīs*[1] to the Jāmi‘ Musjid so that they would be presented as an offering to students who lived there. But the students, who are carefree by nature, ate all the *jalebīs* without making the offering. This caused an uproar and the women came with their husbands. One of the students displayed a lot of wisdom. He rushed to Hadrat Wālā and asked him to come quickly because a serious turmoil was

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[1] A type of Indian sweetmeat.

unfolding. Hadrat Wālā rushed and put an end to the clamour with excellent wisdom. This is how he did it: He slapped a few students and displayed his anger at them. He asked: "How can it be permissible to eat something which belongs to someone without their permission?" When he began hitting the students, the people themselves began saving and rescuing them. Hadrat Wālā then asked the women the price which was paid for the *jalebīs*, collected one paisa from each student and handed over the money. Everyone was happy and the matter was resolved. Hadrat Wālā then explained to them saying: "Wahhābīs live here. You must not bring anything for *fātihāh* and *niyāz* over here." Even when he said this, they did not consider Hadrat Wālā to be a Wahhābī, but the students.

This type of relationship caused not only all the residents of this district but all the people of Kānpūr to love Hadrat Wālā, and respect for him became deeply embedded in their hearts. I now conclude this chapter by providing some details about Hadrat Wālā's teaching methodology.

Simple And Refined Teaching Methodology

Hadrat Wālā's teaching methodology was so simple and refined that when a student attended a few of his lessons, he could not feel satisfied by any other teacher. Hadrat Wālā relates: "I used to bear a lot of fatigue when I was teaching. I used to store the subject matter of the lesson in my mind before teaching. Consequently, my entire lesson was extremely simple, flowing and in sequence. As a result, the most difficult themes used to become most simple for the students and they understood them very easily. Although simplifying the lesson used to exhaust me, the students did not experience any confusion in understanding any aspect. For example, there is a famous discussion in *Sidrā* which is known as *Muthannāt bi at-Takrīr* and which was considered to be extremely complex. When I reached this section, then before even informing the student about it, I provided him with a simple explanation of the main themes without informing him that it concerns a difficult section. I merely explained it to him on the surface. Because I had simplified it so much, he understood it very well."

"This student's name was Maulwī Fadl Haq and he was the first to qualify from Madrasah Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm. He taught for a long time in Qanūj. Anyway, when he affirmed that he understood the section very well, I said to him: 'This is the

section which is known as *Muthannāt bi at-Takrīr.'* The moment I said this, he became alerted. I said to him: 'Don't worry, we have passed it.' I then asked him: 'Now you tell me, was it a difficult section?' He replied: 'The other students had always frightened us about this section but it turned out to be absolutely simple.' I quoted this couplet to him:

> I had heard a lot of noise about the heart from the people of the past. But when I cut it open, it turned out to be just a drop of blood.

The section was actually very difficult, but because I conducted the lesson without giving any real importance to it and continued in a plain and flowing manner, he understood it very easily. Yes, I myself had to bear a heavy burden to simplify it for him. I placed the burden of others on my head. This was always my methodology in teaching. But the teachers of today do not want to burden themselves in any way. The fact of the matter is that affection is no longer present; a task job is merely being fulfilled. Coincidentally, the annual written exam for Maulwī Fad̲l H̲aq contained the question on *Muthannāt bi at-Takrīr*. The examiner was Maulānā 'Abd al-Ghaffār S̲āh̲ib, a well-known, sharp and erudite scholar of Kānpūr. Maulwī Fad̲l H̲aq had understood this section very well after I had explained it to him so he answered it very well, and the examiner was most impressed. Even the Madrasah authorities preserved his answer so that other students could benefit from it. It was really worth preserving. Just recently I asked Maulānā Sa'īd Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib Lucknowī, who had been a senior teacher at Jāmi' al-'Ulūm, to search for the answer paper but, unfortunately, it could not be found. It would have been most beneficial for students."

During my present lengthy holiday, I commenced studying Arabic after H̲ad̲rat Wālā suggested that I study it. H̲ad̲rat Wālā said: "I neither have the time nor the strength or else I would have personally taught you and you would have learnt very quickly. This is especially so with regard to logic. If you were to study just one book on this subject under me, you will have no need whatsoever to study any other book. You would have developed full proficiency with logic."

Method Of Delivering A Lesson

Hadrat Wālā says: "When teaching a lesson, I never explained more than necessary. I sufficed with solving the text. I never wasted the time of students with superfluous points. I used to emphasise this on the teachers under me. In fact, I would occasionally go to check how they were teaching. Many teachers bring out fine and intricate points merely to display their insight. This causes confusion in understanding the actual text. Some of them offer the excuse that as long as such intricate points are not mentioned, the students are not convinced about the teacher's proficiency. But what should they be looking at, the students' conviction or their benefit? Their essential benefit lies in explaining and solving the actual text of the book because this is the only way of developing capability. Once their capabilities are developed, they will be able to understand intricate and subtle points automatically. This ought to be the main focus of the teacher."

Weekly Speech Contests

Hadrat Wālā adds: "There is no need for these new practices which have sprung up – practices like weekly speech contests and debates. In fact, they are quite harmful because instead of concentrating on the lessons of the week, the students pay more attention to preparing for the weekly programmes. First of all, there is no need whatsoever for this type of practice lessons because once the text books are understood thoroughly, the ability to speak, write and debate will be developed automatically. If there is enthusiasm in this regard, the student must be made to deliver a speech connected to the text books which he is studying. In this way, he will be able to practise the art of speaking and will not affect his studies. In fact, his knowledge of his text books will become more consolidated."

Three Essentials For Developing Academic Capability

Based on his experience, Hadrat Wālā advises students to adhere to three practices. He says: "If you do this, I guarantee you will acquire academic capability. (1) Ensure you study the next day's lesson. This is not a difficult task because the purpose of it is merely to differentiate between what you know and what you do not. You do not have to strive any further. (2) You must study the lesson under your teacher after having

understood it thoroughly. Do not proceed without understanding. If the teacher is not inclined to explain it at present, you can get him to explain it later. (3) You must explain the meaning to yourself. Once you adhere to these three points, you do not have to worry. Whether you remember the lesson or not, you will certainly develop academic capability by the will of Allāh *taʿālā*. These three points are on the level of an obligation. Then there is one point which is desirable, viz. you must revise some of your past work on a daily basis.

A Pure Fountain Of Knowledge

In short, Hadrat Wālā was an expert in the field of teaching. Even now, most of his themes in his assemblies are most beneficial to students. He explains intricate points which are found to be useful by even senior teachers. A few teachers who used to teach with Maulānā Muhammad Shafīʿ Sāhib Deobandī said to him: "Why do you go to Thānah Bhawan during the holidays? You should rather occupy your time studying books which would increase your academic knowledge."

When Maulānā Muhammad Shafīʿ Sāhib related this to Hadrat Wālā, he asked him: "Okay, leave aside the spiritual benefits, tell me, after establishing a bond with me, did you find any assistance in your teaching as opposed to before your coming here?" He replied: "Hadrat, I experienced tremendous help; I perceive a clear difference." Hadrat Wālā said: "Very well, if anyone mentions this again, all you have to tell them is that you go there [Thānah Bhawan] to study."

Love For Students

From the incidents and events related in this chapter, the reader must have gauged that Hadrat Wālā possessed total expertise in passing on and teaching external sciences as well. Although it has been quite some time since he is engaged in internal and spiritual instruction, he still has a lot of affinity with the external sciences. He has so much of respect and love for scholars that he respects and reveres even his juniors, and is most affectionate towards students. When they come to him from Deoband and Sahāranpūr in such large numbers during the holidays, he goes to the extent of providing concessions to his normal rules and regulations. He says: "They [students] belong to my fraternity. How can I apply rules to them? Yes, it is another matter if one of them comes for his rectification. In

such a case, there will also be chastisement. For example, if a person merely goes to meet a doctor, the latter will offer him a cool drink. But if he went for medical treatment, he will have to give him some bitter medication and inform him of what foods to avoid."

Respect For Scholars And Jurists

Hadrat Wālā refers to himself as a student and says by way of mentioning Allāh's favours to those who seek superficial Sufism: "I do not know the mystical ways of the mystics. I am merely a student, ask me matters pertaining to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. I simply know the Qur'ān and Hadīth, and consider them to be the essential Sufism." He also speaks about the intense need for 'ulamā' because the system of the Dīn is upheld solely through them. Without them no one will know the injunctions and limits of Islam. Sufism comes after that. He constantly says: "I have more love for Sufis in my heart, but more respect for 'ulamā'."

Similarly, he showers immense praises on the services rendered by the jurists. He expresses extreme respect and reverence for them. He says: "The respect which I have for the Sufis is like that of a younger brother towards his elder brother. And my respect for the jurists is like a son's towards his father. Allāh's relation with the Sufis is also like that of small children, and with the jurists like that of big boys. The actions and movements of small children are appealing, and they are considered to be unaccountable for many of the things which they do. But the real work is taken from the big boys."

"May Allāh *ta'ālā* shower the best rewards on the jurists for the phenomenal services which they rendered to Islam. They made the path absolutely clear for the Muslim community, or else, it would have remained pitch dark. They studied the Qur'ān and Hadīth and extracted such principles which are sufficient until the day of Resurrection. No matter what new issue crops up, the ruling with regard to it can be gauged very easily in the light of those principles. Two groups are sources of tremendous mercies of Allāh *ta'ālā*, viz. the jurists and the Sufis. These are the physicians of the Muslim community."

Qualification Certificate

I feel I ought to conclude by writing something about the qualification certificate so that Hadrat Wālā's attention to serving Islamic sciences may become clear, and a beneficial modus operandi may be provided for those involved in the field of teaching and education. The madāris normally issue qualification certificates only to those who have completed their studies. However, Hadrat Wālā was of the opinion that if a student did not study the rational sciences because of disinclination to the subject, disinterest or lack of time, but studied all the traditional sciences; then there was no reason why he should not receive a qualification certificate. Both were therefore issued with certificates. The difference was that the one who completed only the traditional Islamic sciences will have the words "Islamic studies" mentioned in his certificate and not "studies". The printed certificate for both types of students was the same with the only difference being that a blank space was left to fill either of the two previously mentioned words. This will become clear from the following certificate which is quoted as an example:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يسبح لله ما في السموات وما في الأرض الملك القدوس العزيز الحكيم. هو الذي بعث في الأميين رسولا منهم يتلو عليهم اٰياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتٰب والحكمة وإن كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين. واٰخرين منهم لما يلحقوا بهم وهو العزيز الحكيم. ذلك فضل الله يؤتيه من يشآء والله ذو الفضل العظيم. وبعد:

فيقول الفقير إلى الله الغني محمد أشرف علي الحنفي التهانوي عفى عنه ما صغر وما كبر. إن الله سبحانه وتعالى سمى في هذه الاية بعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم معلما للكتاب والسنة "فضلا عظيما". وكفى بهذا تشريفا لمعلم وتعظيما. وأن أصل العلوم هو الكتاب والسنة واحتيج في تفصيل بعض ما اجمل فيها إلى القياس وإجماع الأمة ولكونهم باللغة العربية، افتقر إلى الفنون الأدبية. ولجمع شتات الفصول مست الحاجة إلى الأصول. ولإقامة الحجة والبرهان على أهل الزيغ والطغيان اضطر إلى قدر من قواعد الميزان. فهذه العلوم التي قد أشير إلى أقسامها وارتباط ما بينهما ونظامها لا بد منها في إحياء الدين، وإقامة مراسم الحق واليقين. وما عدا ذلك من الفنون الفلسفية والخرافات السفهية، فهو في نفسه جهل وشين، وكذب ومين. وإنما يقصد بالتحصيل

لغرضين: أحدهما وهو لا يتجاوز الطالب البحث عن الشر ليجتنب الضر، كما قال حذيفة رضي الله عنه: كان الناس يسئلون رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن الخير وكنت أسئل عن الشر مخافة أن يدركني...الخ. فكأنما عناه القائل بقوله شعر: "عرفت الشر لا للشر لكن لتوقيه – ومن لا يعرف الشر من الخير يقع فيه." وثانيهما هو المتعدي إلى غيره دفع مكائد الفلاسفة وغوائلهم، والقلب عليهم بكفتهم وحبائلهم، ورميهم بقسيمهم وشجهم بعصيهم كما قيل شعر: "سلوا سيوف فلاسف بفلاسف، رضخوا بها هامات اٰل فلاسفا." فالأخذ منها وإن كان أحكم وأشد (بالمعجمة) لكن فيه خطر، والترقي عنها أسلم وأسد (بالمهملة). وهو طريق الحذل. وإن أخي في الله (اسم الطالب).......قد ركب الطريق الأشد (إن كان فارغا من الدرسيات) أو الأسد (إن كان فارغا من الدينيات) وسلكها بجهد وجد حتى بلغ مقاطع الحد من جميع العلوم النافعة، والتي هي للريب (بالتحتية) رافعه بمعنى المزيلة (إن كان فارغا من الدرسيات) أو للرتب (بالفوقية) رافعه بمعنى المعلية (إن كان فارغا من الدينيات) التي كتبها بين الطلاب مشهورة، وفي آخر هذه الوريقة مذكورة مدة إقامة في هذا المدرسة التي هي بحمد الله تعالى مغنمة للفضائل ومكسبة، وهي من سنة (كذا) ه إلى سنة (كذا) ه، ولم يزل في أوان تحصيل العلوم يقيم وظائف المدرسة والرسوم من التدريس والإمتحان، والإفتاء والوعظ بالسنة والقرآن، فهو بحمد الله تعالى شاب صالح ذو فضائل جليلة وأخلاق جميلة، حري بأن عمم بعمامة الفضيلة بحضرة العلماء الكرام والمشائخ العظام، اتباعا لسنة خير الأنام عليه أفضل التحية والسلام، وهي ما نقل في در المعارف عن الطبراني قال (الراوي) كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يولي واليا حتى يعمم ويرخي سدلها من جانب الأيمن نحو الأذن. وأودعه بقلب كئيب وأوصيه وصية المحب إلى الحبيب، أن يجعل الشريعة شعاره، والأدب رتاره، وأن يكون من علماء الآخرة، ولا يبيع الدين بالدنيا فيرجع بصفقة خاسرة، ولا يتباعد عن خدمة العلم وذويه، ويترفق بالمرتحلين إليه وطالبيه، وأن يجتهد إن وفق لعلوم المكاشفة فإن العلم ما في القلب لا ما في الشفة، وأسأله أن لا ينساني من الدعاء ولو بعض حين، أن يتوفاني الله مسلما ويلحقني بالصالحين، ويجمعنا في جنة الفردوس بخدمة نبينا وحبيبنا وحبيب رب العالمين سيد الأنبياء والمرسلين، وصلى الله عليه وسلم أبد الآبدين ودهر الداهرين، وكان هذا في شهر كذا تاريخ كذا يوم كذا سنة كذا مقام كذا عدد كذا. وها قد حان إنجاز الوعد في عد الزبر، وبختمها نختم الأسطر (أسماء الكتب).

Those who completed Hadīth studies were also given a certificate. It contained the transmission chains for the Six Authentic Hadīth Collections and the *Muwattā* of Imām Mālik

rahimahullāh. It is a lengthy certificate so we are not quoting it here. In addition to a certificate, each student would receive a turban on which the student's name, madrasah name and year of qualification would be written with silk. In the beginning, those who completed the recitation and memorization of the Qur'ān did not receive turbans. But later, Hadrat Wālā felt that if the students of Hadīth can receive, why should the students of the Qur'ān be deprived? So they also started receiving turbans.

The Traditional Sciences

Hadrat Wālā had certain special opinions with regard to the important issues concerning the rational sciences. Many senior and erudite scholars approved of his opinions. Even after he gave up teaching and settled down in Thānah Bhawan, he continued teaching at least the elementary books of logic to certain special associates. This enabled them to develop proficiency in logic and paved the way for them to study other books.

Shortened Syllabus

Hadrat Wālā formulated a short syllabus for those who did not have sufficient time. He titled it *Damān at-Takmīl fī Zamān at-Taʿjīl* (a guarantee of completion in a short time). He had to author ten new text books for this course. He referred to this collection as *Talkhīsāt ʿAshar* (ten concise texts). He personally taught this syllabus to some of his relatives and found it sufficient. All the above incidents demonstrate the keen interest which Hadrat Wālā had in the external sciences despite having given up teaching and becoming occupied with Sufism. His interest continues to this day and he considers it most essential for the Dīn.

STUDENTS

From a study of the previous chapter the reader must have gauged fully well that Hadrat Wālā lived in Kānpūr for only fourteen years but was able to initiate an excellent system of teaching and education there. Many students from far and wide acquired the higher sciences from him. After qualifying, a large number of them became distinguished scholars who combined the rational and traditional sciences. A large number of scholars received Hadīth certificates from them. We could not establish the exact number of his students and it cannot be done because of their large number. However, we obtained a list of the students who passed through him during his tenure as the head teacher at Madrasah Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm. A list is attached towards the end of this biography. We did not see the need to make enquiries about those students who came later on. From among those who qualified, there are a few special students who are worthy of mention. A short introduction to them is provided below.

1. Maulānā Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib Bardawānī

He is a distinguished scholar. When Hadrat Wālā vacated his teaching post at Madrasah Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm, he appointed him as his deputy and the head teacher. He continued running the Madrasah for a certain period of time in the same way as Hadrat Wālā had. He then proceeded to Madrasah ʿĀliyah in Calcutta where he taught Islamic subjects. From there he went to Madrasah ʿĀliyah Dhaka. He was pensioned off after reaching a level where he began receiving about 500 rupees per month as a salary.

He is now occupied in teaching Islamic sciences to students free of charge. His memory is extremely powerful. In the course of his stay in Kānpūr, he memorized the Qur'ān in six months although he had other responsibilities of teaching. When he taught the prescribed text books, he used to quote the explanation, story, poem or anecdote in exactly the same lesson, same occasion and in the same manner as given by Hadrat Wālā. He took much delight in doing this and would always attribute it to Hadrat Wālā. During his student days, he memorized the entire grammar book, *Kāfiyah*, and after

qualifying, he would revise it occasionally so that he does not forget it. Hadrat Wālā also appointed him as his khalīfah.

2. Maulānā Rashīd Sāhib Kānpūrī

He was an intelligent, bright, sharp, well-mannered and humble person. He had become a teacher at Madrasah Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm while Hadrat Wālā was still teaching there. When Hadrat Wālā appointed Maulānā Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib as the first teacher, he appointed Maulānā Rashīd Sāhib as the second in charge. He remained in this post for quite some time and also carried out the duty of issuing fatwās in a beautiful manner because he had special affinity with jurisprudence. When Maulānā Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib went to Madrasah ʿĀliyah Calcutta, Maulānā Rashīd Sāhib was offered a high salary to join him there. He did not live too long. He suffered from a stroke and passed away. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his stages in Paradise.

3. Maulānā Ahmad Alī Sāhib

He was a pious personality who possessed many excellent qualities. He combined the internal and external sciences. He was the first khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā. He was an expert in the field of jurisprudence. So much so, when Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* posed certain juristic questions to him, he was most impressed by him and said that he has great affinity with this subject. His expertise in jurisprudence can be gauged from the fact that he was the one who wrote the first five parts of *Bahishtī Zewar* after Hadrat Wālā had instructed him to do so. Thousands of Muslim men and women benefited from this book, are benefiting from it, and – inshā Allāh – will continue benefiting from it until the day of Resurrection. He passed away before he could complete it. He passed away at a very young age or else people would have benefited tremendously from him. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his stages in Paradise.

4. Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib Karsauwī

He was a senior practising scholar of sensitive disposition, extremely intelligent and very perceptive. He was a khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu*. He was very particular about piety to the extent that he said to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion: “I fear Allāh *taʿālā* might take me to task for

being so pious." Although he was from the progeny of a shaykh, he abhorred innovations and baseless customs to the extent that he had severe differences with his father on the issue of maulūd. Hadrat Wālā wrote an emotional letter to his father in which he explained this issue in an extremely soft tone, with many details and proofs. Subsequently, all differences were resolved. Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī was most pleased by this reconciliation and gave due appreciation to the letter. The letter has been printed under the title *Maktūb Mahbūb al-Qulūb.*

He used to undertake severe spiritual exertion especially with regard to eating and sleeping less. This caused him to become thin and frail. Hadrat Wālā used to prohibit him time and again because present day people cannot bear such exertion. But he was overenthusiastic so he did not desist. He eventually became extremely weak and illnesses befell him one after the other. This caused an impediment in carrying out certain desirable actions. He regretted his exertion and said to Hadrat Wālā: "If I recover from this illness, I will – inshā Allāh – live comfortably and eat and drink to my fill." Unfortunately, he did not recover and passed away at a young age. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his ranks in Paradise.

5. Maulānā Fadl Haq Sāhib

He was the first of Hadrat Wālā's students to qualify. He was a very capable scholar. He wrote an excellent explanation of *Muthannāt bi at-Takrīr* in the final examination which was very much appreciated by his examiner and the Madrasah authorities. His explanation was preserved by the Madrasah. He was a teacher in Qanūj for some time and passed away. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his ranks in Paradise.

6. Maulānā Shāh Lutf Rasūl Sāhib

Shah Sāhib was an extremely intelligent, sharp, able and brilliant scholar; and a Sufi of strong conditions who engaged in different forms of remembrance. He had pledged allegiance to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* via correspondence, but the responsibility of his education was given to Hadrat Wālā and he also became Hadrat Wālā's khalīfah. He was completely overcome by fear of Allāh *taʿālā* to the extent that Hadrat Wālā said: "I did not see such effects of fear on anyone else." His hands and feet would become cold during spiritual ecstasy and

he would scream and shout. When Hadrat Wālā had initiated a circle of attention during his early days of enthusiasm, Shāh Sāhib who was studying under Hadrat Wālā at the time attended these circles. He used to experience unique conditions, states, ecstasy and expositions. A simplified version of Hadrat Wālā's well-known book, *Qasd as-Sabīl ilā Maulā al-Jalīl*, was compiled by him for the benefit of the masses. He was extremely humble despite his short temper. Very often he would speak in harsh tones to a person, but soon thereafter would present himself before him and seek his pardon.

Towards the end, he came to remain in Hadrat Wālā's service and passed away in Shaʿbān 1344 A.H. in Thānah Bhawan. He did not have a very long life. He was the first person to be buried in the graveyard which was set aside as an endowment by Hadrat Wālā. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his stages in Paradise.

7. Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Mustafā Bijnaurī

His father was a high ranking official but very religious at the same time. Instead of directing his children towards Western education, he turned their focus towards studying Islam. Hakīm Sāhib enjoyed a lofty academic position. He could very easily pen down Hadrat Wālā's statements and admonitions as Hadrat Wālā was speaking. He used to pen them in Arabic because Arabic words are short and comprehensive, and convert them into Urdu later on. He translated the Arabic version of *Munājāt Maqbūl* into excellent and meaningful Urdu. Hadrat Wālā speaks very highly of this translation, and says: "On several occasions, I would first try to work out the Urdu translation in my head and then compare it to Hakīm Sāhib's translation. I always found his translation to be better."

He was the first person to start penning Hadrat Wālā's statements and admonitions. These proved to be a great mercy of Allāh *taʿālā* for the Muslim community. This was followed by the recording of thousands of mawāʿiz and then their publishing. These benefited the Muslim community so much that it is beyond imagination. Hadrat Wālā's well-known work, *al-Intibāhāt al-Mufīdah ʿan al-Ishtibāhāt al-Jadīdah*, was written as an answer to the doubts of modernists. Hakīm Sāhib wrote an excellent commentary to this work. His academic acumen and expertise in the rational sciences are clearly gauged from it.

He also wrote a simplified version of Hadrat Wālā's *Shauq-e-Watan*. He is an expert in the field of medicine, and a famous and well-known physician of Meerut. He is the inventor of many beneficial and unique formulations and medicines. He has a very sensitive and perceptive disposition and temperament, so much so that he can perceive a person's inclination, character and temperament merely from looking at his writing. He is also able to distinguish between a sinner and pious person by just looking at their urine samples.

He wrote the ninth part of *Bahishtī Zewar* and the *Bahishtī Gauhar* – in which he penned his experiences, procedures and medications for the treatment of all types of illnesses and ailments. He did a great favour to the Muslims because countless of them were cured through these treatments and suggestions. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards in both the worlds.

Acting under the advice of Hadrat Wālā, he wrote *Tibbī Jauhar*, in which he wrote about the permissibility or impermissibility of various types of medicines. He filled a huge vacuum in this way. He wrote several other useful books, e.g. *Maʿmūlāt Ashrafīyyah, Majālis al-Hikmat, Amthāl ʿIbrat*, etc.

His is also a high-ranking spiritual doctor and from among Hadrat Wālā's senior khulafā'. He is very particular about piety and is vigilant over the most intricate and subtle doubts. Honesty and sincerity are his salient features, and servitude and submission are his conditions.

During his hajj journey, the driver of the vehicle refused to stop the car to perform salāh. Hakīm Sāhib got ready to jump off while it was moving. But look at Allāh's power, something went wrong with the car and it stopped on its own. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of Hakīm Sāhib, all the passengers were able to perform their salāh with ease.

He is very desirous of doing acts of welfare. He treats students and the poor for free, while paying full attention to their treatment. Those of his acquaintances who intending going for hajj receive special medications which would be needed for the trip. He also gives them other necessities, e.g. a map showing the direction of the Kaʿbah. Most of these items are given to them as gifts. He is very concerned about his neighbours and relatives. He memorized the Qur'ān at an old age, and is an

expert at correcting those who memorized the Qur'ān. In short, he is a collection of great excellences and a treasure house of beautiful qualities.

8. Maulānā Sayyid Is-ḫāq Alī Sāḫib Kānpūrī

He is a very capable and talented teacher, and a highly paid Arabic professor at Allāhābād University. He is of very sound disposition, extremely humble, a man with a strong bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, and a khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā. When he was departing for hajj, he wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā. Every word of the letter expresses his extreme yearning and, at the same time, his genuine servitude and submission. He also wrote the following couplet with extreme remorse and regret.

> When I went to perform tawāf of the Kaʿbah, I was not permitted to enter the Haram. I was told: What did you do outside the Haram which could make you eligible to enter it now?

He writes further on: "I did not have the courage to present myself before the Kaʿbah, but what can I do, I have to fulfil the obligation of hajj also. I am therefore going with my head hanging down in shame."

9. Maulānā Mazhar al-Haq Sāhib

He was a man of letters who was adept at writing poetry and prose in Arabic and Persian. His capabilities were well-known in Bengal. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his stages in Paradise.

10. Maulānā Sa'īd Ahmad Sāhib Itāwī

He was a distinguished judge in Gwalior and also a chief of his family. Although he did not teach, he took part in many Islamic works and rendered great services to Islam in this way. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate his stages in Paradise.

Note: These ten are from among the distinguished students of Hadrat Wālā.

□

Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Uthmānī, Maulānā Sa'īd Ahmad And Maulānā Mazhar Alī Khān

Finally, I am quoting a letter of Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib Thānwī which he wrote in fulfilment of a request which I made

to him. He, his elder brother, Maulānā Saʿīd Ahmad, and Hadrat Wālā's younger step-brother, Maulānā Muhammad Mazhar ʿAlī Sāhib studied certain books under Hadrat Wālā. Details in this regard are mentioned in the following letter.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Peace and salutations to the Chosen One of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* conferred many bounties on me. A very major bounty which He conferred on me was the opportunity of studying under Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummah Mujaddid al-Millah when I was only 12 or 13 years old. During those days, Hadrat Wālā used to teach a few students – specifically my brother, Maulānā Saʿīd Ahmad Sāhib, the correct recitation of the Qur'ān. These classes were conducted after the maghrib salāh and occasionally after the fajr salāh. I would also attend. I, together with my brother, studied every lesson of *Tanshīt at-Tabʿ* under Hadrat Wālā and a portion of *al-Mukarrarah.* During those days, Maulānā ʿAbdullāh Sāhib Gangohī and my brother used to study the *Mathnawī* under Hadrat Wālā after the ʿasr salāh. I was very particular about attending these lessons as well. Then when Maulānā ʿAbdullāh Sāhib took leave from Dār al-ʿUlūm Thānah Bhawan to spend some time in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī, I began Arabic lessons under Hadrat Wālā, particularly *at-Talkhīsāt al-ʿAshr*. My remaining lessons were under the tutelage of my brother. From *at-Talkhīsāt al-ʿAshr*, I clearly remember studying the following under Hadrat Wālā: *Talkhīs al-Manār maʿa al-Madār, Talkhīs al-Miftāh, Talkhīs Hidāyah al-Hikmah maʿa Dirāyah al-ʿIsmah, Talkhīs al-Mirqāt, Talkhīs al-Bidāyah li al-Ghazzālī, ʿAsharah Turūs Talkhīs Mi'ah Durūs*. I am inclined to think that the remaining sections were also studied under Hadrat Wālā.

My brother, Maulānā Saʿīd Ahmad completed the syllabus of *Damān at-Takmīl* under Hadrat Wālā. The major books of this syllabus, viz. *Taysīr al-Wusūl, Taudīh wa Talwīh, Sharh ʿAqā'id Nasafī, Jalālayn Sharīf*, and a few textbooks of the Dars Nizāmī were studied by my brother under Hadrat Wālā in my presence. He also studied a few volumes of the *Mathnawī* under him. I am not sure if all six were completed.

My uncle, Janāb Mazhar ʿAlī Sāhib Thānwī who is presently the assistant director at the C.I.D. office also studied the syllabus of *Damān at-Takmīl* under Hadrat Wālā. He studied all this very well and thoroughly because he used to be with Hadrat Wālā

all the time – at home and on journeys. Hadrat Wālā was very happy with him by virtue of his Allāh-bestowed intelligence. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable him to become inclined to the Islamic sciences and Ahādīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* once again, and returns to his origins so that the seed which Hadrat Wāla had planted may flourish and the fruits may be displayed in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn.

Was salām
Zafar Ahmad, *may Allāh pardon him.*
7 Safar 1354 A.H.

Love And Affection For Students

Hadrat Wālā has many capable students who are holding high positions, earning top salaries, and who combine the external with the internal. He has a very deep bond and attachment with his students. He often says: "I do not have as much a bond with my associates as I have with my students because I am not so open with them as I am with my students." Even his students had developed intense love for Hadrat Wālā during their student days. Those who studied under him were most fortunate. Congratulations to them.

SOUND ADMONITION

Allāh-Bestowed Capability

Delivering lectures or, in other words, conveying Allāh's injunctions is the most important Sunnah of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. Allāh *taʿālā* places this special attribute in the natural disposition of those ʿulamā' who are sent to this world as inheritors of the Prophets. It is especially essential for this attribute to be found in the most perfect form in a person who was destined to become a specialist physician of the Muslim community and its reviver. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this Allāh-bestowed capability is found in Hadrat Wālā from the very beginning. The effects of it were visible from his childhood. It was his childhood game to go into a musjid, climb the pulpit and mumble something as if he was delivering a lecture. This was related in the chapter on his childhood. Presently, it is so obvious that Hadrat Wālā is the Chief of Lecturers that there is absolutely no need whatsoever to provide any proofs in this regard. The mere appearance of the sun is proof of its existence. The world is witnessing it and affirming it.

There are countless exhortations of Hadrat Wālā which are available in print form. Any person wanting to verify this quality has to merely read them. This despite the fact that they do not contain Hadrat Wālā's words in their entirety, because no matter how fast a person may be in taking down notes, Hadrat Wālā's fluent and flowing speech could not be recorded word for word. As for the eloquent, comprehensive, expressive and meaningful words which emanate from his mouth, these can only be appreciated by the one who is physically present in his assembly. I can say without any exaggeration that Hadrat Wālā's informal assembly sounds like the reading of a certain intricate academic and practical thesis which was written after much research and investigation by an erudite research scholar who prepared it after intense pondering and reflection. He is not like other lecturers who merely blurt out whatever comes to their mind without bearing in mind their original topic, present it without any sequence, and terminate it wherever they like.

A sufficient proof of the value and mass appeal of Hadrat Wālā's exhortations is that very rarely will you come across personalities in the past whose exhortations were penned without the personality instructing for them to be penned or his special associates making efforts in this regard. Instead, they were penned by ordinary people who were most interested in them and paid particular attention to them. Then they are printed so profusely and accepted by all sections of the community while Hadrat Wālā is still living.

Speech Practice During Student Days

Hadrat Wālā was enthusiastic about delivering talks since his student days; in fact, since his childhood, as mentioned earlier. During his student days, he got some of his classmates to form a group and to organize a weekly speech practice on Friday nights. Although this group did not have any formal union, the work continued. It was not like the unions of today which have lengthy names and titles but whose work is superficial and virtually non-existent. Many such lectures were delivered in Deoband.

First Public Lecture

Hadrat Wālā's marriage was performed when he was still a student. He went to attend a function in Thānah Bhawan. While his father was proceeding to the musjid for the jumuʿah salāh, he said to Hadrat Wālā's maternal uncle, Janāb Munshī Wājid ʿAlī Sāhib: "I am busy today, so I will go to the Haud Wālī Musjid for jumuʿah. You must make him [Hadrat Wālā] deliver a lecture in the Jāmiʿ Musjid after the jumuʿah salāh." When he informed Hadrat Wālā, he refused out of shame. But his uncle did not pay heed and made an announcement on his own. Hadrat Wālā was now forced to deliver a talk. He relates: "I was so nervous that I did not even sit on the pulpit. I sat on the ground with my gaze down and commenced a talk on the beginning verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah."

The Focus Of Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muhammad

Soon thereafter, Hadrat Wālā saw a dream in which he saw Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muhammad Sāhib Muhaddith Thānwī *rahimahullāh* who had passed away about two years ago. There is a place known as Dohītaro which lies between Muzaffar Nagar and Charthāwal. The Maulānā had many disciples in

this town. Across the musjid is a banyan tree which exists to this day, and the Maulānā was seated on a bed under this tree. Hadrat Wālā presented himself enthusiastically before him, sat next to him and said: "Hadrat, I am very pained by your demise." He replied: "The focus which I had on you when I was alive exists now as well." The Maulānā then said in the dream itself: "I heard that you got married!?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Yes." He said: "Congratulations."

The Maulānā was a very famous and well-known scholar and Sufi master who used to deliver many talks and lectures in Thānah Bhawan. This is why Hadrat Wālā says: "I am inclined to think that Maulānā visited me in my dream subsequent to my delivering my talk."

A Lecture On The Occasion Of The 'Urs Of Shaykh Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī

Apart from the speaking practices which Hadrat Wālā had during his student days, his first real general talk was the one which he delivered in the Jāmi' Musjid of Thānah Bhawan under the request of his father. He was about eighteen years old at the time. His next talk was when he went to his in-laws in Gangoh. Coincidentally, it was the time of the 'urs of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. There too, the people insisted on him to deliver a lecture. Many senior family members of the Shaykh were present.

Hadrat Wālā commenced his speech by providing many virtues and merits of the Auliyā' of Allāh. Then he went on to refuting innovations and the harms which they caused in society. He commanded much respect despite his tender age, so despite differences with him, they used to ask him to lead them in salāh, and those who were present in the gathering remained seated and listened to his talk. However, when Hadrat Wālā stepped forward to perform the maghrib salāh, an old man separated himself from the row and performed his salāh on his own. On the completion of the salāh, someone asked the old man the reason for his action. He replied: "He speaks ill of the pious elders, that is why I did not perform salāh behind him." He was asked: "Which pious elders did he insult? We only heard him speaking of their merits." He replied: "He spoke out against the small drum." He was asked: "Is a small drum your pious elder?" He replied: "Yes, a small drum is my pious elder."

The people laughed when they heard this. The old man went into a rage and said: "Even if Jibrīl *ʿalayhis salām* were to come and speak out against it I will not accept." All the people, even the pīr zāde,[1] reprimanded and rebuked him, and said: "These are ʿulamā' and they have a right to teach us the injunctions of the Sharīʿah. The Sufis always showed due regard to the Sharīʿah, submitted before the injunctions of the Sharīʿah, and never contradicted it."

In short, even the pīr zāde defended Hadrat Wālā. Later on, the old man asked the people whether Hadrat Wālā had come and looked at the jubbah sharīf.[2] When he was informed that he did, he went to Thānah Bhawan to ask Hadrat Wālā to pardon him. Hadrat Wālā relates: "The pīr zāde of the past were at least okay in the sense that they used to engage in Allāh's remembrance even though they were caught up in evils. But today, the majority of them are mere businessmen [who try to enrich themselves by virtue of their relationship with their pious forbears]."

Refusing Any Recompense For Delivering A Lecture

Hadrat Wālā never accepted any type of remuneration for delivering a lecture. So much so that he would even refuse a gift which appeared to be a remuneration. On one occasion, Safīyyah Begum, the daughter of Nawāb Siddīq Hasan Khān Sāhib, requested Hadrat Wālā to deliver a talk, and presented him with a considerable sum of money at the end of his talk. Hadrat Wālā refused blankly. She said: "This is not a remuneration." He replied: "It certainly appears like one. People will suspect that it was given as a remuneration, and no one will be able to request a speech without having a gift ready." She said: "Have something to eat." He replied: "Send it to my house so that it does not appear to be a remuneration. Anyway, I am a guest at someone else's house." He agreed to this because he knew – from past experience with the family – that she was sincere.

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[1] Pīr zāde refers to the progeny of a pious personality or Sufi.
[2] This refers to the overcoat which used to be worn by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh.*

The Subject Matter Of His Talks

Hadrat Wālā used to deliver a talk at whichever place he travelled to. He used to say: "I feel ashamed to eat at a place without having delivered a talk there." Hadrat Wālā never included any subject matter which was specifically requested by any person. Instead, he would say what Allāh *taʿālā* placed in his heart at the exact time of delivering his lecture. Yes, it is a different matter if he felt the need to include the requested subject in the course of his talk or it came into his talk coincidentally. On one occasion, a person requested him to speak out against those who play the drum. He replied: "It is not my habit to speak out against anyone in particular. I will explain whatever comes to my mind."

In one place, there were differences between the authorities of two madrasahs. He was requested to speak on this subject in order to remove their differences. But Hadrat Wālā did not touch on the topic at all because if he were to speak in favour of one side, the other side would think he was opposed to it and that he was propped up by the other side. There will be no benefit in this. He used to say: "When delivering a talk, the sole objective must be for the common good. Most topics which are requested by people are based on certain personal objectives. The results of such talks are therefore not good."

A Strange Incident

Hadrat Wālā said on one occasion: "I give a talk as best as I can. I do not have an opportunity to think about it before hand or to refer to any book. What I say is what comes to my mind at the time. In the course of one such lecture, the thought came to my mind that I have some power of expression, even though it may not be on the level of seasoned orators."

After this, I sat down to deliver a talk but could not proceed. I tried my utmost to think of something but could not say anything. My speech could not move forward and no subject matter came to mind. I read a verse, translated it, but then I just shut down. I brought in some synonyms to the translation thinking that this may open the way for me to say something more, but nothing happened. I was compelled into thinking about one of my past talks, after all, I had delivered many talks before this. But no such topic came to mind, and my brains were not functioning at all. I realized I was unable to say

anything. I was eventually forced to address the gathering thus: "Dear brothers! No subject is coming to my mind at the moment. What can I say to you? Let us make duʿā'." We made duʿā' and concluded the assembly. In short, the talk terminated before it could even start. I was quite embarrassed because arrangements had been made for this talk, carpets had been laid out, a stage had been set, and so on. The people too had assembled very enthusiastically, but I could not say anything. Everyone was astonished because this had never occurred in the past. But I was not surprised because I knew that this was Allāh's treatment for my pride and an answer to my thoughts which crossed my mind occasionally. That is, the thought that I am quite adept at delivering lectures. Allāh *taʿālā* showed to me that everything is through His inspiration and that I have no power whatsoever. I repented from these thoughts and never experienced such a situation again. It happened just this one time in my entire life. Allāh *taʿālā* taught me a lesson for the rest of my life so that I do not have the slightest thought that I can deliver a lecture whenever I like. He taught me that whatever I say is solely through His inspiration."

Style Of Speaking

Hadrat Wālā always commenced his talk with the normal prelude [of praising Allāh *taʿālā* and salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] and by reading a verse of the Qur'ān or quoting a Hadīth. Most of the time he commenced with Qur'ānic verses, and occasionally with Ahādīth. Hadrat Wālā never wasted time singing poems or quoting rhymed couplets as is the case with orators in general. He always delivered a most eloquent and meaningful lecture which contained evocative and strong words. Despite this, his audience used to be left entranced. So much so that some of his opponents used to discourage people from attending his talks by frightening them off by saying that he resorts to some type of soothsaying. Whereas whatever effect and impact he had was by virtue of his absolute integrity and sincerity – both of which were most salient qualities in him. In the course of his lecture he would quote most appropriate Arabic, Persian and Urdu poems which would inject life into his subject matter and cause the audience to respond spontaneously. It seemed as if the poem which he quoted was written specifically for that occasion. Although Hadrat Wālā never paid particular attention

to memorizing poems, he knows a very large number. A scholar collated all Hadrat Wālā's poems which he quoted in his talks and writings. They number close to a thousand.

Quoting Poetry

Hadrat Wālā never rendered poetry as though it was music. If he recalled an appropriate poem, he would quote it spontaneously in his unique appealing manner, causing the audience to go into a sort of trance. I recall an ordinary person's statement. He said: "When he reads a poem, he grasps my heart." Hadrat Wālā delivered a lecture in Allāhābād on one occasion. He had a flu so his voice was quite heavy. Someone remarked at the end of the talk: "The talk was very good but his voice is not good." On hearing this, Hadrat Wālā said in his next lecture: "I am not a musician, not the child of a musician, nor the student of a musician."

Hadrat Wālā has the power to quote appropriate examples and stories similar to the power which Hadrat Maulānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī *rahimahullāh* had. He is able to draw unique lessons and conclusions from useless anecdotes and immoral stories. These anecdotes, stories and examples sometimes reduce the audience to tears and sometimes to laughter. Hadrat Wālā's lectures contain all the higher sciences, but they are always overpowered by the subject of Sufism, and every lecture concludes on this subject.

Impact And General Acceptance

No matter which place Hadrat Wālā goes to, people from distant areas come to visit him. Repeated requests are made to him to deliver talks in their areas, and they take him for this purpose. The entire audience remains seated in great anticipation before the commencement of his talk. It is as though each person there is saying:

> Make your appearance because the people are going mad and getting distressed. Open your lips because men and women – everyone – are begging you.

In the course of his talk, the entire audience seems to be entranced. I have seen some senior leaders and wealthy people sitting in the intense heat without moving from their places. In most of his lectures the people are reduced to tears while others go into an ecstasy. In the course of a large assembly at

Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband where Hadrat Wālā was delivering his speech, a person was overcome by an intense feeling of ecstasy which was not subsiding. This resulted in confusion among the audience and the talk remained unfinished because the man began jumping on the people. Some of them got injured and others began dispersing.

A man was completely overcome by Hadrat Wālā's lecture on the occasion of Mu'tamar al-Ansār in Murādābād. When Hadrat Wālā got down from the stage, the man fell at his feet and began rolling in front of him. He did not even think about the fact that he could be trampled by the large crowd. He was totally enamoured by Hadrat Wālā, severed his relations and went to Thānah Bhawan on the same day or one or two days later. But due to an absence of affinity, Hadrat Wālā did not accept his pledge of allegiance. There are countless such people who were so impressed by Hadrat Wālā's talks that they gave up sins forever, turned in repentance and became the seekers of Allāh *taʿālā*.

An Expression Of What Lies In The Heart

All this was the effect of the true and genuine heart which Hadrat Wālā possessed. He says: "When I advise any person, I desire with all my heart and soul that he must become like that." Most of Hadrat Wālā's subject matter in his talks is an expression of what is in his heart and of his lofty spiritual conditions. This is why his every talk is a manifestation of the following couplet of Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*:

> O friends! Listen to this story because it is really an expression of my own condition.

Hadrat Wālā said: "When I perceive any matter within me which needs to be rectified, I give a talk about it. I benefit tremendously from this because when I am speaking, I feel passionate about what I am saying and this has an effect on my heart. Furthermore, I also feel ashamed over the fact that I too should carry out the advice which I am giving to others. My lecture titled *Waʿz al-Ghadab* (a lecture on anger) was delivered with the same purpose."

In short, every talk of Hadrat Wālā was an expression of the feelings of his heart. A poet says:

There is no need to describe enthusiasm because the fire which is raging in my heart can be identified from the heat which is in my speech.

Impact On Modernists And People Of Other Religions

I personally heard people holding high positions and those who acquired western education saying: "We never thought there is such a lecturer among the maulwīs who can prove every single point with logical and rational proofs." I myself experienced this on several occasions. Many highly educated Hindus, Christians and Shīʿas were impressed by the printed versions of Hadrat Wālā's lectures. A Hindu teacher hailing from a mountainous region who was well known for his strictness on his religion used to take Hadrat Wālā's printed lectures one after the other and study them. Some senior Shīʿah scholars used to borrow these lectures from me through another person, study them closely, and use the subject matter to embellish their own assemblies.

A lecturer from Pānīpat used to pray a lot for Hadrat Wālā. He used to say: "May Allāh keep him well, I now have the means for my sustenance. I memorized a few lectures and deliver them at different places. I receive many gifts and presents, and people think I am a very powerful scholar." One day I was sitting in a train and reading *Rāhat al-Qulūb* (comfort for the hearts) to my friends who were seated near me. A Hindu overheard it and said: "This book is certainly written by a very distinguished scholar." Similarly, when the ship's owner heard me reading Hadrat Wālā's *Tarīq al-Qalandar* during my journey to Rangoon, he thought I was its writer. He pointed towards me and said: "Had this person studied English he would have become a judge."

A highly qualified Maratha master who was employed by the state was present in Hadrat Wālā's lecture which he delivered in Bhopal. He used to say: "I heard many distinguished lecturers in India and overseas, but I never saw in them what I saw in him today. I never saw anyone speaking without first having prepared some notes, and then delivering such a lengthy talk which is so scholarly, sequenced, and that too, which is delivered with such fluency."

A western-educated person holding a high position in Bharatpūr heard Hadrat Wālā's lecture and said: "I was

astonished at the fact that he was speaking about a purely religious matter, i.e. about fasting. Despite this, his subject matter and themes were such that every person belonging to every other religion could have applied them to his own religious principles." After delivering a talk in Kānpūr, a celebrated lawyer came to Hadrat Wālā and addressed him by quoting the following couplet with full passion:

> By whose excellence have you reached perfection!?
> By whose beauty are you illuminated!?

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "The thought occurred to me to reply to him with the following couplet:

> I reached perfection through the excellence of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. I am illuminated by the beauty of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib.

But I felt ashamed to make unnecessary claims to excellence and beauty."

A carefree lawyer said to Hadrat Wālā after a lecture: "How did you become entrapped by the maulwīs!? Had you passed the board exams, there would have been no lawyer like you."

Affirmation From Elders

Hadrat Wālā was delivering a talk in Gangoh on one occasion. In the meantime, when anyone went to meet Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*, he would say to the person: "Why have you come here. Go and listen to the divinely-inspired talk which is being delivered." Similarly, the chief of debaters, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: "A real talk is one regarding which no one has an opportunity to point a finger."

An Effective Method Of Rectifying The Masses And The Elite

There are countless testimonies to show that Hadrat Wālā has no equal in oratory. Anyone who did not get an opportunity of listening to him can study his printed lectures and testify this himself. Every other day Hadrat Wālā receives letters in which people inform him that they benefited tremendously from his printed lectures and their entire lives changed for the better. An untold number of western educated people who were enamoured by fashion and freedom became genuinely religious

people through the blessings of studying his lectures. They gave up their western lifestyles, photographs and fashion.

I myself know many such people who were ardent followers of Western fashion and held atheistic beliefs. But they happened to come across a certain lecture of Hadrat Wālā, read it and were so absorbed by it that their entire lives changed. In fact, some of them progressed to the level of becoming his khulafā'. There were some dervishes who considered the Sharī'ah and Tarīqah to be two separate entities and went to the extent of not performing salāh. But when they read Hadrat Wālā's *al-Arwāh*, they repented from their beliefs and began performing salāh.

Hadrat Wālā's lectures related to maulūd and his *Thalj as-Sudūr* and *Badr al-Budūr* have been printed together. On studying these, certain fanatics of maulūd had their misunderstandings removed and their beliefs were put in order. So much so that they began rectifying the beliefs of others although they neither met Hadrat Wālā nor referred to him. Many of those whose lives had become bitter because of calamities, experienced comfort and relief after studying *Rāhat al-Qulūb*. He delivered a lecture to provide solace to the relatives of one who had passed away. A study of this lecture is most consoling and comforting on such occasions. In short, thousands of people experience religious, material, academic and practical benefits from Hadrat Wālā's lectures and exhortations. O Allāh! Increase and proliferate their benefits.

The Story Of A Person Holding A Governmental Position

Hadrat Wālā went to Shamlah and stood up to deliver a talk. As was his habit, his clothes were absolutely simple, but clean and neat. A western educated person whispered to the organizer of the function who happened to be his friend and an official in a government position: "Look at the clothing of your 'ulamā'! It is as though he just relieved himself and came here." The official replied: "I am not going to give any reply to you now. You can say whatever you want at the end of the lecture, and I will give you an answer." When the lecture ended, the official said to him: "Okay, you can now say what you want to." The man was initially silent. He then said: "Yes, it was my foolishness. I assumed that the talk will be like the clothes. But the complete opposite happened. Glory to Allāh. Glory to Allāh.

What an excellent talk! By merely looking at his clothes one could not gauge what a great man he is.”

Someone else who was present related this incident to Hadrat Wālā. When he commenced his next talk, he directed his attention to the western educated person, but in a very cultured and subtle manner. He said: “I have learnt that some people do not like my clothes. I do not wish to speak on the subject of whether it is essential for a speaker to be well-dressed or not. Each person has his own taste.”

“Anyway, I will accept, for those people, that a speaker ought to be well-dressed when addressing people. I am basing this on one advantage, viz. good clothes create respect in the person, and when this respect is established, his speech is also respected and increases the effect and impact of his speech. However, the question which arises is from where should those clothes come? Obviously, a considerable amount of money is needed to purchase good clothes. But the present income of the maulwīs can never suffice. So an easy way out is that wherever a lecturer has to deliver a talk, the people of that place must have clothes which appeal to them kept ready for the speaker. Any lecturer who comes must wear those clothes which were set aside for this purpose. When he completes his talk and is about to leave, he must remove those clothes so that they could be used for similar occasions in the future. So I am now waiting for the person to make such arrangements. If he did not make them, he ought to drown himself in shame.” (This was the only sharp sentence in the entire speech). That person was present in the talk and was most embarrassed.

Reply To An Objection Made Against Hadrat Shāh Sāhib’s Speech

I recall another incident which occurred in Shamlah. Janāb Maulānā Anwar Shāh Sāhib [Kashmīrī] *rahimahullāh* and a few other ‘ulamā’ of Deoband had accompanied Hadrat Wālā. A request was made to Shāh Sāhib to speak on the topic of *I‘jāz al-Qur’ān* (the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān). First of all, this was an academic subject [which is not understood easily]. Furthermore, Shāh Sāhib’s academic acumen resulted in him speaking on very intricate points which most of the audience could not understand. The majority of the audience consisted of educated people. After the speech, these educated people began speaking among themselves and were making objections against the speech. They said: “What was the need for Maulānā

to even come here? He should have rather remained in the Deoband Madrasah and addressed the 'ulamā'."

Hadrat Wālā was informed of this objection. When it was his turn to address the people, he quoted the above objection and said that it was a useless objection. He added: "You yourselves are responsible for this because you gave us an academic topic which could not be simplified for all to understand. Even the extent to which it could be simplified was wittingly not done because there was some great wisdom behind it. Furthermore, we wanted to demonstrate to you that if you cannot even understand the Urdu speech of 'ulamā', how will you be able to understand the Qur'ān and Hadīth?! Deriving rulings from them is far more serious. You people must have realized by now that you are certainly incapable of giving your opinions on matters pertaining to Dīn." Here too, those who had made objections were quite embarrassed.

Rectifying A Pīr Zāde

A Pīr Zāde brought an 'ālim with him to attend one of Hadrat Wālā's lectures in Mārwār. He brought this 'ālim so that if Hadrat Wālā says anything which is against his beliefs, he will get him to debate Hadrat Wālā. He did this because he feared that some of his followers will lose confidence in him after listening to Hadrat Wālā's talk. Hadrat Wālā had no knowledge of all this, but – under the inspiration of Allāh *ta'ālā* and appropriate to the situation - he mentioned something in this regard. In the course of his talk he said: "It is our duty to financially help the children of the Sufis. But no religious services should be taken from them, and one should not take the trouble of asking them rules and regulations of Islam. This is the responsibility of the 'ulamā' because they are qualified for it. But the 'ulamā' should not be helped financially because they do not need it in the least. All of them are earning a living sufficient for their needs. As for those children of the Sufis, they have no source of income. So they should be served financially, while the work should be taken from the 'ulamā'."

The Pīr Zāde was overjoyed when he heard this. Instead of debating with Hadrat Wālā, he went and kissed his hand. After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "His joy was futile. He did not realize that I actually chopped off his roots because people will only serve and support those who serve Dīn and from whom they derive benefit."

Addressing Opponents In A Gathering

It was Hadrat Wālā's practice not to speak on a subject which he was requested to speak on. Instead, he would speak on a subject which was really needed in a particular place and was inspired by Allāh *taʿālā* in his heart at that very moment. As for controversial issues, he was very particular about refraining from them. If these were mentioned incidentally, he would speak about them clearly, but in a pleasant and nice manner. He had many occasions of delivering talks to those who were opposed to the truth and those who were immersed in innovations. But, on the principle of:

اَلْحَقُّ يَعْلُوْ وَلَا يُعْلٰى بِعَوْنِ اللهِ تَعَالٰى

The truth always prevails and, by the help of Allāh, is never prevailed.

He constantly remained victorious and beloved, while the opponents felt defeated and intimidated.

Before he could deliver a talk in Jaunpūr, he received a filthy letter which mentioned four things: (1) You are a jūlāhā (a person belonging to a low caste). (2) You are an ignoramus. (3) You are a kāfir. (4) You must watch what you say in your speech.

Before he could start his speech, he addressed the audience and said: "I need your advice on a certain matter. I received this letter." He then read it before everyone and said: "It states that I am a jūlāhā. Even if I am one, what is so serious about it after all I have not come here to establish any family ties; I have come to convey the teachings of Allāh *taʿālā*. What does this have to do with nationality and which caste I belong to? Anyway, this is not even within a person's choice. Allāh *taʿālā* causes a person to be born in whichever nation He wills. All nations are the creations of Allāh *taʿālā*. They are all good if their character and actions are good. This is the answer to the issue itself. As for whether this accusation is correct or not, there is no need to verify it after having proven that such an argument is of no benefit. But if anyone still wants to verify it, I will write down the names and addresses of the seniors of my hometown, he can go to them and verify that I am not a jūlāhā. And if you have confidence in me, then here I am informing you that I am not a jūlāhā."

“As for the point which states that I am an ignoramus, I admit before you that I am indeed an ignoramus. In fact, I am the most ignorant of all. However, I merely quote before you what I heard from my pious elders and what I read in books. If anyone doubts the authenticity of anything which I say is free not to practise on it.”

“As for the accusation that I am a kāfir, there is no need to go into too much discussion on this subject. I am saying before all of you: ‘I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh. I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.’ Even if – Allāh forbid – I was a kāfir, I am no longer one because you heard me reading the kalimah.”

“The final point threatens me to watch what I say. My response to this is that I am not a professional lecturer. When anyone insists that I speak, I say whatever little I know. If you people do not want me to speak, I will certainly not speak. As for ‘watching what I say’, let me tell you frankly that it is not my habit to interfere and meddle with anyone. I do not intentionally say anything which would hurt the feelings of any particular group or could cause a disruption. But if, in the process of investigating the principles of the Sharī‘ah, there is a need to mention any such issue which is related to innovative customs, then I do not desist because desisting in this regard will clearly entail betrayal in matters of Dīn. After hearing all this, you people must apprise me of whatever views you have with regard to the lecture which I am about to deliver. If the most insignificant person among you tells me not to speak, I will definitely not speak. But my personal view is that I should be allowed to speak now, and when I say anything which is disagreeable to anyone, I must be stopped immediately. I promise you that even if the lowest among you stops me, I will stop immediately and take my seat. It would be best if the person who wrote this letter were to stop me. If he is shy to say so himself or does not have the courage, he can secretly ask someone else to stop me.”

On hearing this, a Pathan who was a maulwī in the rational sciences, held bid‘atī beliefs and had a lot of influence in that place responded spontaneously: “The person who wrote the letter is an illegitimate. You may continue with your talk, what

kind of Fārūqī[1] are you?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "I am a Fārūqī of a place where the people of this city consider to be a jūlāhā."

When the entire gathering began speaking out against the one who wrote the letter, and especially when the Maulwī Sāhib began hurling abuses at the letter writer, Hadrat Wālā stopped him saying: "Do not be abusive. You should at least respect the musjid." Hadrat Wālā then delivered a powerful speech. In the course of an academic discussion, he unwittingly touched on some customs and innovations. Once he started on this subject, he went into much detail without any fear of anyone. But, as was his practice, he did it with absolute decorum and without causing any ill feelings. Although Hadrat Wālā had given an open permission to anyone to stop him in his tracks, no one had the courage to do it.

> This is the awe of the truth, not of the creation. It is not the awe of the one in tattered and torn clothes. When a person fears Allāh and remains righteous; the jinn, man and every onlooker fear him.

In the beginning, the Maulwī Sāhib was expressing his approval and constantly shouting out: "Sub-hānallāh, Sub-hānallāh" because Hadrat Wālā was speaking about Sufism. But once he spoke in refutation of innovations, the Maulwī Sāhib fell silent. However, he remained seated and continued listening. This too was through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* because it was learnt later on that this man was extremely fanatical. Whenever he heard any lecturer saying anything which was against his temperament, he would catch the lecturer by his hand and pull him off the pulpit. But this time he did not have the courage. He just remained seated, listening to Hadrat Wālā. There were two reasons for this: (1) It had to do with Hadrat Wālā's Allāh-bestowed awe. (2) The man had to back up what he had said in the beginning. But when the talk ended and people began leaving, the Maulwī Sāhib said to Hadrat Wālā: "What was the need to speak on these issues?"

Another influential Maulwī Sāhib who was also a bidʿatī came forward to give a reply, but Hadrat Wālā stopped and said: "He addressed me, you do not have to answer. Let me answer."

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[1] Referring to Hadrat Wālā's lineage which goes up to Hadrat 'Umar Fārūq *radiyallāhu 'anhu* who was well-known for his bravery and forthrightness. (translator)

Hadrat Wālā then addressed the Maulwī Sāhib: “You did not inform me before hand. Had you done, I would have been more careful. Anyway, I said whatever I said because I considered it necessary. But what can we do now, the talk is over. Yes, there is a way out. The people are still present. You can make this announcement: “O people! There was no need for this talk.” I will not oppose you when you say it. In this way, you will have the final say. Everyone laughed. Based on the response of the people, the Maulwī Sāhib feared he will be disgraced. So he offered salām and departed immediately.

After he left, the people began speaking out against him. When there was a lot of noise and clamour, Hadrat Wālā stood up and said: “Brothers! You should never abandon your local ‘ulamā’ for the sake of an outside ‘ālim. I am going to Machlī Sheher today. I am specifically addressing the person who sent the letter to me. He must refute my lecture so that both views will be presented before everyone, and you can choose whichever way you like. There is absolutely no need for troublemaking.” Thereafter, the other Maulwī Sāhib who had stood up previously to defend Hadrat Wālā although the former held bid‘atī beliefs, stood up once again and said: “Brothers! You all know fully well that I believe in maulūd, standing up for salutations, and so on. But the truth of the matter is that the lecture which the Maulānā delivered today is absolutely correct.”

The gathering ended and Hadrat Wālā proceeded to Machlī Sheher. An attempt was made to refute Hadrat Wālā’s lecture the next day, but no one was impressed. Those who were present were comparing the two talks and said: “In comparison to yesterday’s talk, today’s talk is like a person who is merely making faces.”

Commotion In Jaudhpūr And Mumbai

After relating these incidents, Hadrat Wālā said: “All thanks are due to Allāh *ta‘ālā*, although I had the occasion to deliver lectures before many strong opponents, I never faced any unpleasant episode nor was I defamed anywhere. That is, defamation which is normally considered to be defamation. I went to different places and had to encounter people holding various beliefs. But I never concealed my views and my creed from anyone. Allāh *ta‘ālā* provided me with honour and comfort wherever I went. There were just two occasions which caused

anxiety, but did not reach the level of distress. Once in Jaudhpūr and another time in Mumbai; (these are related further on) and that too due to misunderstanding because in most places where the opponents are in the majority, I happen to be their guests. They gladly insist on me to be their guest, and I would never say or do anything which caused ill-feeling."

There are many opponents in Mumbai, but there too, the people insisted that I must deliver a talk. I delivered a frank and open talk, and wherever I went, I intermingled freely with all types of people. I was very open with everyone, both in privacy and in public. Some friends in Bareilly had warned me for not being on my guard. They said that there were many opponents there, and I should make arrangements for my security. I should not move around freely everywhere. I replied: "These are all baseless suspicions.

لَنْ يُّصِيْبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ

Nothing except what Allāh decreed for us will afflict us. He is our Master. Those who place their trust ought to place it solely in Allāh.

Nothing can happen without Allāh's decree. If Allāh willed for something to happen, then even a thousand safety measures will not avail."

An Incident In Jaudhpūr

The distress which was experienced in Jaudhpūr and Mumbai is now related. The first incident which took place in Jaudhpūr is in H̲ad̲rat Wālā's own words.

A friend from Thānah Bhawan requested me to go to Jaudhpūr. I went there with Maulānā (Khalīl Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib Sahāranpūrī *rah̲imahullāh*). Acting under the requests of people, I delivered several lectures there. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, there was a lot of benefit from these talks and they created some softness and good impressions in the minds of the bidʿatīs. At the end of each talk, an announcement for the time and venue for the next talk would be made. This was done at the request of the people. At the end of my talk on one of those nights, an announcement was made that I would be delivering a talk in a certain place, but no request had been received by the people of that area for me to go and deliver a talk there. It was known to be filled with mischief makers and obstinate people. The

people felt that the next day being a Friday, and since the residents of that area normally gather for the Friday salāh, it will be a good opportunity to get the truth across to them. But the first impediment was that the majority of the residents were fanatical and zealous bid'atīs. Secondly, they had a particular grievance with my friend [who had accompanied me from Thānah Bhawan] since a long time. The cause of this grievance was two-fold: on one hand, the residents' thinking was warped, and on the other hand, my friend was very sharp-tongued.

They were offended by the announcement and felt that this measure was adopted in order to put them to shame. So they resolved not to allow this talk to proceed.

Based on the circumstances, my friend too perceived some danger. He made a request to the magistrate who was from Galautī and held sound beliefs to organize a police force at the exact time of the lecture so that there is no untoward incident. The request was accepted, and an inspector with a few youngsters were instructed to be present.

We were informed of this at the exact time when we were making preparations to leave for the jumu'ah salāh. Based on my temperament and disposition, I felt I should not go to such a volatile place. I removed all thoughts about delivering a lecture from my heart and expressed my view to those who were present. My friend said: "These are all baseless stories. The person who related this to you is cowardly and spineless. He becomes scared like this everywhere. We should most certainly go. Maulānā [Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī] said: "Even if it is true, we should not bother about such matters for the sake of conveying the truth."

I did not really give any regard to my friend's opinion because I felt he had some other worldly motive. But I remained silent when Maulānā spoke out. Although I still felt we should not go, I agreed for two reasons. (1) The basis for his opinion was Dīn even though it is an individual judgement which does not have to be accepted. At the same time, it is not impermissible. (2) If Maulānā is prepared to go, who am I to try and save my life?

The entire assembly reached there but found the situation to be completely different. No one greeted us, no one spoke to us; so where will they even ask us to lead them in the salāh!? When the salāh was completed, our friends announced that a

talk will be delivered. A local resident shouted in a loud voice that no talk will be delivered. This resulted in shouting and counter-shouting from both sides. I cannot even describe the clamour which ensued. Everyone forgot about the Sunnah salāhs of jumu'ah and they got engrossed in this issue. Maulānā and I began performing the Sunnah salāh in one corner. But Maulānā was at peace with himself while I was worried about the outcome. There was no sign of the police. One person eventually went and sat down on the pulpit. He thought that if he was sitting there, no one will be able to deliver a talk. The extent of the people's ignorance can be gauged from this.

One Khān Sāhib who was our supporter was also of the same temperament. He took a dagger and attacked the one who was sitting on the pulpit. Another Khān Sāhib of Taunk who was a calm and collected person was present there. He held the hand of the attacker from behind and stopped him, saying: "We will all get caught up in this fight." He became angry and left the gathering. In the meantime, the clamour and noise continued unabated.

After I completed my salāh, I realized that all this anger was based on the possibility that a lecture will be given. So I called the ringleader and seated him next to me. It was a boon that he came and sat down. He then said in an angry tone: "Say whatever you have to say." I said: "Do you suspect that a talk will be delivered? Now listen: I am the speaker and my speech is not so cheap that I will force someone into listening. I deliver a talk after winning everyone over to me. Seeing the present situation here, there is no way I will deliver a talk. You can be rest assured, I will certainly not speak here. In fact, if all the residents of this place request me to speak, I will not speak. I do not want you people to fight. The announcement which was made was done without consulting me. In fact, it was made against my wishes."

The man cooled down immediately and everyone fell silent. Much later, someone informed me that he said: "There is nothing wrong with these people [referring to us]. We ought to place their shoes on our heads. This entire commotion was caused by the person who made the announcement on his own accord."

I also heard that the people said: “We had no objection to the lecture being delivered. What we could not accept was the forceful manner in which everything was arranged. Had we been informed directly, we would have presented ourselves personally and made a request for the lecture to be delivered. We would have then laid out carpets, and made arrangements for ice and drinks for the guests. But they humiliated us by handling the affair in the manner in which they did.”

We left the musjid when the commotion subsided. On the way, we met the inspector with the guards. They said: “Come, you may deliver your talk now.” I said: “Glory to Allāh! You arrived so late!? Our blood was almost shed here. Why have you come now? The talk cannot be delivered now. There was no talk, it was a mere play. As the saying goes:

> Of what benefit is your arrival after my departure!?

Maulānā [Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī] was saying: “Look at the joy in the discomfort which is experienced in the path of the truth.”

An Incident In Mumbai

The incident in Jaudhpūr was quoted above. I requested Hadrat Wālā to describe the incident which took place in Mumbai. He fulfilled my request by penning it down. I am quoting it verbatim.

When my junior wife was returning from hajj, I was informed by telegram to come to Mumbai. A chief whose wife was also returning from hajj accompanied me to Mumbai. Arrangements were made for me to stay over at the house of Hakīm Muhammad Sa‘īd Sāhib, but he was not present at the time. Another resident of Mumbai affectionately requested me to stay at his house. I accepted his invitation.

When we went to the harbour, we saw that the ship had arrived but because it was already late in the evening, the passengers were not permitted to disembark. I returned to the house to spend the night there. I performed the maghrib salāh in the local musjid. There was to be a debate during those days, and posters were stuck everywhere announcing this debate. Some people from out of Mumbai were expected to attend this debate. Some mischief makers saw me and

assumed that I too had come for the debate. The way of mischief makers has always been as mentioned in this couplet:

> When an oppressor can find no proof, he gets ready
> to resort to violence.

In line with the above principle, an armed group of people came to the house in which I was staying after ʿishā. They broke the lantern and attacked us violently. A worker of the chief who had accompanied me repulsed the attack. There was a veranda going out towards the street. It was quite dark there, so I went away into the veranda. The owner of the house also came and called out for the police. The mischief makers fled and Allāh *taʿālā* protected us all. Later on we learnt that the mischief makers had assumed that we had come to take part in the debate.

The next morning, some friends informed the commissioner of police of what transpired. He said: "The one who was attacked [referring to myself], will have to remain behind. If he agrees, I will make arrangements to apprehend the mischief makers." I was disinclined to this for two reasons: (1) I had to convey the returning ẖājīs quickly to their homes. (2) The action of the mischief makers was not intentional. Like an unintentional murder, it was not eligible for retribution. Moreover, arrests and apprehensions of this nature were against the ways of our pious elders. However, what I did do was that I did not stay in that same house. Instead, we all proceeded to the house of H̱akīm Muẖammad Saʿīd S̱āẖib. Furthermore, it would have been easier to meet all the ẖājīs there. We got them to disembark and housed them in H̱akīm S̱āẖib's house. I walked about freely in public for the next few days which we remained in Mumbai. There was no specific danger because the mischief makers had been mistaken about me. I then returned safe and sound to my hometown. This incident was related most incorrectly, and people were even told that I had been killed. I received letters from friends wanting to establish the truth. They were relieved when they realized I was alive.

In short, through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, no one was offended or angered by any of my actions during my journeys. These two incidents (in Jaudhpūr and Mumbai) were caused by others. Here too Allāh *taʿālā* protected me from their ill effects.

A Talk Must Be Based On Sincerity And Necessity

Every talk of Hadrat Wālā was based on sincerity and necessity. The people of Jaudhpūr generally refer to Deobandīs as Wahhābīs. This is why one of Hadrat Wālā's well-wishers of Jaudhpūr suggested he speak on the merits of Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Wālā blankly refused because it would mean that he is speaking on this topic for his own advantage, viz. people may refer to him as a Hanafī [and not a Wahhābī]. Whereas a talk ought to be delivered for the benefit and advantage of the audience. Similarly, a large gathering was organized in Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Some of the elders there said: "The merits of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* should be spoken about so that the suspicions of those who think we are Wahhābīs will be cleared. Furthermore, this is an excellent opportunity because people from all walks of life are present."

Hadrat Wālā replied respectfully: "This will need narrations and I do not have them in my mind at the moment." So they said: "If any narrations come to your mind when you are speaking, you must shed some light on them. If not, you do not have to." Since Hadrat Wālā was given a choice by the elders, he spoke on the topic of love for the world. There was a real need to speak on this subject because most people were immersed in this evil. Benefit to the general masses demanded that he speak on this subject, whereas speaking on the other subject which he was requested would have been to the benefit and advantage of his own group. That is, to save them from defamation. Obviously , the general good takes precedence over a specific benefit.

There was another point which prompted Hadrat Wālā to speak on this subject, viz. he had fallen extremely ill shortly before this gathering to the extent that there was no hope of attending. While in this sick condition, Hadrat Wālā dreamt that he was delivering a lecture in this gathering, and he was speaking on this Hadīth:

حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيْئَةٍ

Love for this world is the cause of every evil.

Consequently, Hadrat Wālā recovered beyond all expectations, gained sufficient strength, and spoke on the above Hadīth. In

short, every talk of Hadrat Wālā was based on sincerity and necessity. This was the reason why he received unseen help, and the audience used to be most impressed and derived tremendous benefit. It is a commonly accepted fact that Hadrat Wālā's talks, lectures and statements are in line with the condition and circumstances of his audience. His talks seemed to embody the following couplet:

> O you whose visit is an answer to every question! When we meet you, every complexity is solved without any difficulty.

In fact, most of the seekers thought that Hadrat Wālā received an exposition. But Hadrat Wālā takes an oath and denies it. He explains the reason: "Allāh *ta'ālā* knows the condition of every person's heart. He places in my heart the subject matter which is appropriate to what is in the audience's heart, and conveys it through my tongue. This brings relief and satisfaction to the audience."

The Author's Own Experience

I recall my own experience. Hadrat Wālā was speaking about whisperings in a talk which he delivered in Allāhābād. He was saying that Satan casts whisperings into the heart from above; they are not born from the heart. This is similar to crops which are produced on the field, brought from there and stored in one's house. While Hadrat Wālā was speaking in this line, the thought occurred to me that it really seems as if whisperings are born in the heart. Hadrat Wālā immediately said: "Although it seems as if whisperings are embedded in the heart, this is not the case. Whatever we perceive in the heart is merely a reflection. Like when a fly is sitting on a mirror, it seems to be inside the mirror whereas it is merely its reflection. It is sitting on the mirror." I was fully satisfied when I heard this.

A Unique Incident

I recall another incident related to the fact that Hadrat Wālā's talks and lectures were based on absolute sincerity. A soon-to-be-delivered talk of Hadrat Wālā was advertised in Allāhābād. A large crowd of people assembled enthusiastically, but Maulānā Sulaymān Sāhib Phulwārī sought permission from Hadrat Wālā to say a few words first. But his talk became quite detailed and prolonged. When he completed, Hadrat Wālā refused to speak,

despite the audience's insistence. He said: "The Maulānā has mentioned all the necessary points, what is the need for me to say anything further? Now that you are insisting on me to speak, it means that I must search for and speak on themes which were left out by Maulānā, and to show that I am better than him. It would appear like a competition. So I am not going to say anything further."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of sincerity and consideration for other 'ulamā'! This incident was related to me by Shaykh Muhammad 'Umar Sāhib Allāhābādī who is the special attendant of Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī.

Appealing Lectures To Opponents

When occasions demanded it, Hadrat Wālā spoke on issues and matters which were severely contested, and on which there were divergent views. The beauty of such talks was that he did not hesitate in expressing and establishing the truth, and left no stone unturned in disproving falsehood. At the same time, he did not insult anyone nor did he ever cast aside civility. He himself says: "I will make them eat the bitter gourd but after making it delicious with sweet ingredients. I will give them a sugar coated pill so that instead of it getting stuck in the throat, it will go down easily." I often saw Hadrat Wālā speaking very frankly to modernists but in a very appealing tone, causing them to listen with a smile and to benefit from what he was saying.

A Lecture At Mu'tamar al-Ansār

An assembly was hosted by Mu'tamar al-Ansār in Meerut. A strict and stern lecturer openly criticized those who studied English and went to the extent of labelling them as accursed people. They were quite displeased by his address. Hadrat Wālā addressed the same crowd the next day. He started with the following prelude: "The Maulānā who addressed you yesterday did not have enough time so he spoke in concise terms. Since his topic is important, I will provide you with its details today." After explaining and expounding on the atheistic beliefs of modernists in some detail, he said to them: "I now ask you to decide for yourselves; if a person holds such beliefs and does these actions, what decision will you pass on him in the light of the pure Sharī'ah?"

In short, let alone saying what the Maulānā had said yesterday, Hadrat Wālā said even more things against them. But the difference was that he conveyed his theme in a subtle and appealing manner without offending them in the least. In fact, they practically acknowledged that they were certainly as detailed by him. Hadrat Wālā said whatever he wanted to say, but without using a single offensive word. He followed this with an extremely simple and logical course of action which they must follow in order to remove their misgivings and set right their beliefs. He said to them: "If you really want to reform your ways, you must go to a person whom you consider to be an erudite scholar and spend at least forty days with him as a guest. But you must remain silent during this entire period. Yes, you may note all your misgivings and doubts and give it to him. You must then listen to whatever he says periodically in his talks and assemblies without asking any questions or making any objections. After listening to these talks, you must ponder and reflect over them in privacy. I can make a promise in Allāh's name, in fact, I can claim that if you follow this procedure – inshā Allāh – all your doubts and misgivings will be removed and at least, your beliefs will be rectified. Once your beliefs are put in order – inshā Allāh – your actions will gradually come right."

When they heard this, they began discussing among themselves and said: "This man is claiming that we must experience this ourselves. There is no way we can refute him as long we do not experience it as he says. The fact of the matter is that our hearts are telling us that it will happen exactly as he claims. We cannot refute him without experiencing it first hand."

Research Acumen

A special assembly was held in Lahore to which many senior 'ulamā' were invited. The issue of permissibility and non-permissibility of usury [interest] was discussed. When Hadrat Wālā reached the assembly, Maulānā Sulaymān Sāhib Phulwārī addressed the 'ulamā' and said without hesitation: "The truth will now be made clear, and the milk will be separated from the water."

He was certainly correct because this was exactly the nature of Hadrat Wālā's research and investigation.

During his stay in Kānpūr, Hadrat Wālā noticed people of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah attending the mourning assemblies of the Shīʿah and becoming accustomed to listening to the stories on the martyrdom of Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. So Hadrat Wālā began delivering a series of lectures on the first ten days of Muharram wherein he described the stories surrounding the demise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Four Caliphs. He did this so that there is no imitation of the Shīʿah assemblies.

The people's interest increased to such an extent that the Shīʿah assemblies became empty and the people began attending Hadrat Wālā's talks. Not only the Sunnīs, even the Shīʿahs came in large numbers and were very impressed. They cried profusely even when they heard about the circumstances surrounding the demise of the first three Caliphs. But when it came to describing the martyrdom of Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Wālā used so simple and straightforward words and sentences that although his martyrdom was a painful incident, not a single tear was shed. The people were astonished. Hadrat Wālā used to refute the beliefs of the Shīʿah in the course of these lectures but in a subtle manner without insulting them. They used to come enthusiastically to listen to him, but after the lectures, they would say: "The Maulānā was taunting us."

On one occasion he spoke about the responsibilities and difficulties of the Caliphate. He said: "The Shīʿahs ought to be grateful to the first three Caliphs because they allowed Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to rest for twenty four years. Or else, instead of having to face problems for six years, he would have had to face them for thirty years. After all, he was alive from the beginning of the Caliphate for the next thirty years, and had to be Caliph for only six of those years." After listening to Hadrat Wālā's talks and lectures of this nature, many Shīʿahs became Sunnīs or were more and more attracted to the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah.

Lectures On The Subject of Salāh

Also during his stay in Kānpūr, Hadrat Wālā delivered many major lectures. There were times when he spoke for 6-7 hours while standing. Once, he delivered talks for two months only on the subject of salāh. He went to each district and area and spoke on salāh. Subsequently, so large numbers of people

began performing salāh that there was no place in the masājid. People became so enthusiastic about salāh that even the rickshaw-pullers would constantly ask their passengers the time so that they could go and perform their salāh. The lectures of those days contained very intricate and complex academic issues which were conveyed in a very articulate manner and were not difficult to understand.

Themes, Words And Sentence Constructions

Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Mustafā Sāhib relates: "I personally heard him delivering a talk on one particular Hadīth at least fifty times, but his subject matter was never repeated. Unfortunately, the practice of penning his talks had not been initiated at that time or else that too would have been a very valuable treasure."

Some of Hadrat Wālā's lectures are simple and straightforward while others are intricate. Both are unique and effective. They are unparalleled as regards the choice of words and the meanings which they conveyed. They are embodiments of the following couplet:

> The splendour of its beauty refreshes the heart and soul. Those who are interested in the outward are refreshed with its colour, and those who are interested in the internal are refreshed with its fragrance.

We have always noticed all types of people attending Hadrat Wālā's talks and sitting and listening to him for several hours with absolute enthusiasm. Many senior linguists used to attend as well. I heard a senior poet and student of Ghālib saying in astonishment: "I do not know where Maulānā finds these words." On hearing Hadrat Wālā's printed lectures, an old senior poet said to me: "Maulānā creates the joy of poetry in his prose. It is as if he is saying poetry but in the form of prose." On seeing Hadrat Wālā's comprehensive and concise words and expressions, a person was taught the art of shorthand so that his lectures may be penned verbatim. Unfortunately, the person was not successful in this regard.

A Chain Of The Spiritual Masters

A pious and intelligent personality presents an excellent picture of Hadrat Wālā's talks. He says: "Hadrat's lecture is a chain of the spiritual masters."

Hadrat Wālā's lectures were in total accordance with the following instruction of Allāh *taʿālā*:

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ

Invite to the way of your Sustainer with wisdom and kind admonition. Argue with them in a way that is best.[1]

Hadrat Wālā's series of lectures titled *Daʿwāt ʿAbdīyyat* contain these three themes, viz. lectures of admonition, writings of wisdom and balanced argumentation. These are the three ways of general propagation. One is to deliver a lecture in the normal sense of the word. The other is through direct statements. The third is through removing doubts and providing answers to objections.

Latter-Life Lectures

Hadrat Wālā has virtually given up delivering lectures. If he ever has such an occasion, he has a book before him, looks in it periodically and continues with his talk in this way. He says: "The desire to deliver lectures is no longer present because – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – I have spoken about whatever was necessary. My extreme physical weakness is a further obstacle."

He also says: "My heart recoils from lengthy talks. Now I like to confine myself to a specific address according to the need. In reality, a specific address is more beneficial because it contains all the essential points."

This happens to most of the pious personalities towards the end of their lives. Many examples of this are found in the lives of our past elders. Hadrat Wālā writes in his article, *Amthāl al-Aqwāl wa al-Ahwāl li Afādil ar –Rijāl* (examples of statements and conditions of erudite personalities) under the subject of remaining silent when there is no need to speak. He quotes a statement of Hadrat Abū Hamzah Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*:

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 125.

روي أنه كان حسن الكلام، فهتف به هاتف: تكلمت فأحسنت، بقي عليك أن تسكت فتحسن، فما تكلم بعد ذلك حتى مات.

It is said that he was an excellent speaker. An unseen caller called out to him saying: "You have done very well in speaking. It is now time for you to excel in remaining silent." Subsequently, he stopped speaking until his death.

Hadrat Wālā delivered lectures and talks by the thousands. Unfortunately, all were not penned. Those which have been printed to date number 311. Many more are in manuscript form. Bearing in mind that Hadrat Wālā has virtually stopped delivering lectures, there is a dire need to hasten in getting the manuscripts ready for print. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the writers.

TRAVELS

Reasons

Hadrat Wālā was naturally disposed to solitude and was therefore discomforted by crowds. In addition to travels causing impediments in his daily spiritual practices, the crowds of people who were desirous of meeting him caused barriers to his solitude. This is why he was always inclined to remaining at home and averse to travelling. However, he undertook many near and distant journeys for the fulfilment of Sharʿī needs, e.g. performing hajj, conveying the injunctions of Islam, rectification of the Muslim community, visiting the sick and so on. He bore physical and spiritual fatigue and every other type of inconvenience for these purposes. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the Muslim community benefited tremendously from his journeys. Muslims of different regions and lands who could not present themselves before him either because of distance or other reasons were now honoured by the visit of a genuine inheritor of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and a true example of the righteous servants of the past. They were able to derive benefit from his useful statements and lectures, obtain blessings from his company and learn from his perfect example.

Unique Features

In addition to the above-mentioned benefits, an added benefit of his journeys was that those who accompanied him (and a large number of people accompanied him to every place he went to) and other people in general learnt the injunctions and etiquette of travelling. This is because Hadrat Wālā never travelled in a meaningless way as is the general trend. Instead, he adhered strictly to the injunctions of the Sharīʿah and the principles of good social conduct at every point of the journey, and ensured that his companions and those who came to meet him also adhered strictly. This could have only been the distinguishing feature of a Hakīm al-Ummah and Mujaddid al-Millah. After all, who else would pay attention to such intricate matters of piety in these times of liberalism and freedom especially when the difficulties of travelling are added to the equation!

It is not possible to write details about the countless admonitory stories and rectifications in this concise work. Hadrat Wālā's travelogue which has been printed and his *Husn al-ʿAzīz* are filled with such stories and should be studied for this purpose.

Requests

Hadrat Wālā used to receive so many requests from far and distant places that if he were to accept just 10% of them, he would not have the opportunity of living in his hometown for a single day of the year. He used to agree to undertake a journey only after a lot of persistence, on very special occasions, and after many essential conditions and prerequisites were fulfilled.

Preconditions For The Acceptance of a Request

For example, the Nawāb Sāhib of Dhaka, Salīmullāh Khān Sāhib Marhūm, was extremely desirous for Hadrat Wālā to come to Dhaka and persisted in this regard. Hadrat Wālā accepted provided the following preconditions were fulfilled:

1. He must not be given any cash or non-cash gift.
2. Full arrangements for his stay must be made in a place which is completely separate from the Nawāb's mansion so that the Muslim masses may come to meet him without restriction.
3. A special time must be set aside for himself and the Nawāb where there must be no third person so that the two can discuss and benefit from each other without any hindrance or formalities.
4. He must not be requested to deliver a lecture on any specific topic.

Since the Nawāb Sāhib's yearning to meet Hadrat Wālā was overpowering and he was of very sound disposition, he accepted all the preconditions.

The Nawāb Sāhib intended receiving Hadrat Wālā as he would a viceroy. For example, a velvet carpet on the platform, flags along the road, and so forth. When Hadrat Wālā was informed of this by the Nawāb Sāhib's uncle, he stopped him by saying that it was against the Sharīʿah. The Nawāb Sāhib then sought permission to receive him by having a large crowd of people to welcome him, including the workers of the state and other

senior and prominent people of the city. Hadrat Wālā wrote by saying: "This is against my temperament." Despite this, a very large unorganized crowd assembled at the station. The Nawāb Sāhib seated Hadrat Wālā in his special conveyance while he sat in another conveyance. When Hadrat Wālā asked him to sit with him, he excused himself and said to the people that he felt it disrespectful to sit with Hadrat Wālā.

He did not even sit with Hadrat Wālā for the meals because he felt it disrespectful. He made his wives cook special and new types of dishes, and would personally place the platters and plates before Hadrat Wālā. By virtue of the mutual affinity between the two and the fact that he had softened to Hadrat Wālā, he would say things like: "Look! This has been cooked by my young wife especially for you. Do you recognize what it is?" Hadrat Wālā would reply jokingly: "Is it a prerequisite to recognize what you are eating? Its taste is not dependent on recognizing it. The moment it is eaten, its taste will be known and the purpose fulfilled. But if you feel it is a prerequisite to recognize the food, then I have no need for such food. Furthermore, we are town dwellers, what do we know about the foods of the Nawābs?!" The Nawāb Sāhib would then identify each item and explain how it was prepared.

Hadrat Wālā regularly speaks highly about the Nawāb Sāhib's character and sound disposition. He relates many entertaining incidents about his intelligence, humility and religiosity. He even requested Hadrat Wālā to accept his bayʿah but he refused. Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "There is no benefit in accepting the bayʿah of people whom you have to always take into consideration. We must accept a person as a murīd only if – when there is a need of rectification – we can tell him that he is unworthy, or at least, that his action is unworthy." Although Hadrat Wālā refused, whenever he wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā, he would conclude with the words: "Your murīd, Salīmullāh." He had a lot of confidence and faith in Hadrat Wālā. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer him with the highest stages in Jannatul Firdaus. Āmīn.

Nature Of His Journeys

Hadrat Wālā had a natural aversion to travelling. However, since Allāh *taʿālā* had sent him into this world as His proof – a fact which Hadrat Wālā himself perceived – when requests to come and deliver lectures went beyond the limits, he was

forced to accept. He would then undertake lengthy journeys. If he had to leave on one journey, he would receive a string of requests from various places and several months would pass in travelling. In short, divine will decreed that lengthy journeys be undertaken by him, the injunctions of Islam be conveyed, and Allāh's evidence against the creation be established. We were on a journey on one occasion when I asked Hadrat Wālā something about travelling. He replied by quoting the following couplet with full emotion:

> My friend has thread a needle in my neck, and now takes me wherever he wants.

First And Last Journey

After completing his studies, Hadrat Wālā's first journey was in Safar 1301 A.H. when he went to Kānpūr as a teacher. According to Maulānā ʿAbd al-Karīm Gamthalwī, Hadrat Wālā's last journey was probably in Shawwāl 1343 A.H. to Gangoh. By the grace and help of Allāh *taʿālā*, during this period, no region of India was not honoured by Hadrat Wālā's blessed feet, and where he did not convey the teachings of Islam and thereby established Allāh's evidence on earth. The following are some of the places to which he travelled: Karachi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Rangoon, Dhaka, Shamla, Gujarat, Mārwār, Bhāwalpūr, Hyderabad Decca, Sindh, Gorukpūr, Aʿzam Garh, Ghāzīpūr and Benares.

Giving Up Travelling

After this period, Hadrat Wālā's natural temperament which he had kept subdued out of necessity made its appearance, and he gave up travelling altogether. It was his wish since a long time to give up his travels. In fact, he had seven excuses for not travelling printed but this announcement did not have any effect on those who were desirous of inviting him. These excuses were not so overriding so as to deter the people. Yes, his journeys certainly decreased but they could not be stopped completely. Hadrat Wālā was constantly thinking about a reason which would silence all the requests but he could not come up with one.

Eventually, when Allāh *taʿālā* Himself willed for Hadrat Wālā to settle down in one place permanently – as is the case with most pious personalities towards the latter part of their lives,

especially those who are qutbs – Hadrat Wālā received an excuse from the unseen which, by Allāh's grace, was not too discomforting to him, but most sensible and acceptable to others. Hadrat Wālā had been suffering from a hernia for many years, but it never caused him any pain or discomfort. But now it suddenly became very discomforting. When the pain did not stop, the thought came into his heart to have it raised. This was done and it was raised very easily although it had been protruding for so many years. The discomfort disappeared immediately. Subsequently, whenever it was raised, he felt comfort; and when it was allowed to protrude, the pain would return. It became necessary to use a spring. But it would move from its place if he sneezed, coughed or moved suddenly. He would have to lie down and raise the hernia once again. This excuse was a wonderful opportunity for Hadrat Wālā. He said: "How can I travel because if this were to happen while I was travelling, I would have to lie down before everyone and put the hernia back in place. My modesty can never allow me to do this in public." He had this excuse printed as well. A copy of it is quoted here:

> Most of my associates are aware that I am suffering from a hernia for over thirty years. As long as there was enough strength in my body, the discomfort was less. But now my strength has decreased. With the passing of thirty years, my condition has deteriorated to the extent that although I have a hard spring permanently attached, when I cough, get up suddenly, sneeze, speak aloud, speak for long periods of time, remain standing for a long time or walk for a long distance; my hernia protrudes. There are times when it protrudes several times in a single hour. If it is not put right immediately, the pain becomes unbearable. Sometimes when it protrudes, the veins of my stomach and chest contract, causing severe pain. In order to put the spring back in place, I have to be in a private place, lie down, remove my clothes, remove the spring, press the hernia back in place with my hands, and put the spring back in place. Obviously, bearing in mind this entire condition and situation, it is not possible for me to undertake any journey. The doctors have informed me that it is harmful for me to walk around too

much and even stand for lengthy periods. I myself have experienced these actions to be harmful. Over three years have passed since I did not undertake any short or distant journey. In fact, even if a close relative passed away in another district [of Thānah Bhawan], I sent a note of consolation, but did not attend personally.

Since the cause of this is the splitting of the omentum, and it is generally not possible to reattach it, there is no hope for the removal of this obstacle. Many Indian, Bengali and European doctors concur that this condition cannot be treated without an operation. They also concur that an operation at this age is dangerous.

This entire situation makes me permanently excused from undertaking any journey. Some of my associates who have not seen my condition continue to invite me to their functions. I am publishing this announcement for their information so that they will not make such requests after bearing in mind my strong excuse.

Was salām
Ashraf ʿAlī
Thānah Bhawan
10 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1337 A.H.

Despite this announcement, some people continued imposing on Hadrat Wālā to come to them. But because he had made a firm decision of not travelling any more, he did not accede to any request. He has stopped travelling completely for the last ten years. Being the qutb of the time, he is now permanently based in his hometown and continues to shower Allāh's creation with his bestowals and blessings – far more than what he was doing previously.

Preparation For A Journey

Before embarking on a journey, Hadrat Wālā would ponder over the distance, purpose and period. He would then make preparations and adhere strictly to his time table throughout the journey. He would spend several days and nights before his departure in organizing all necessary matters for the entire

extent of his journey so that no task is left unfinished and no necessity is left out at the exact time of departure.

Attention To Luggage In The Course Of The Journey

Hadrat Wālā used to pay particular attention to his luggage. The moment he got off at a station, before he can shake hands and greet, he would count all the luggage and remain concerned about it until he handed over its responsibility to a specific person. He would not allow several persons to carry the luggage in a haphazard manner. Just one or two persons were put in charge. On reaching the place where he is to stay, he will first take stock of all the luggage and stack it in place. He would ask for directions to the toilet from before hand so that when the need arose, he did not experience any inconvenience – especially at night. He used to prepared long before the expected time of arrival of his conveyance. If there was a delay in the arrival of the conveyance, he would start walking. People would then hasten to obtain a conveyance and seat Hadrat Wālā along the way. This was the wisdom behind walking.

Contact With Home

Hadrat Wālā would make arrangements for posting letters home in accordance with the number of days he planned to be away. He would send letters from each of the places to which he went so that there was no cause for any worry or concern at home. Furthermore, the guests who arrived in his presence would also know his whereabouts. He would go to the extent of continuing his task of writing in a moving train. If there was a need, he would take an attendant and scribe for recording his lectures.

Simplicity

He was so simple that he did not bother about which class he sat in. He would very often say: "The enjoyment and comfort which one experiences in the third class cannot be experienced in the upper classes. The people of the third class show consideration to us, while those in the upper classes are immersed in their conceited ways, where will they show any consideration to us!? In fact, we will have to be on our guard in their presence; we will not be able to laugh and talk informally."

Hadrat Wālā was travelling from Sahāranpūr to Rāmpūr where there was to be a debate between the Qādiyānīs and the 'ulamā' who were on truth. Hadrat Wālā attended merely out of consideration for our people and to be with Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib and other 'ulamā'. They had purchased second class tickets but when they saw an empty coach, they all went in. Someone informed them that it was a third class coach. Hadrat Wālā said: "Our purpose is to be comfortable, and we found this empty coach. What better comfort can we find than getting a seat near the entrance?" So they continued their journey in this coach. The Nawāb Sāhib of Dhaka had sent sufficient money for them to travel in an upper class, but by travelling in the third class, he saved the money, sent it back home and, as was his norm, intended to return it to the Nawāb Sāhib. However, he also had to consider the respect of the Nawāb Sāhib. So he purchased tin-roofing for the musjid with the saved amount of money, had a shelter constructed for the ablution place of the musjid, and informed the Nawāb Sāhib. It would have been disrespectful to return the money to the Nawāb Sāhib, and at the same time, it was against his principles to use it for himself.

Strict Adherence To A Time Table

Hadrat Wālā used to adhere strictly to the time table which was drawn up for the purpose of his journey. He was travelling from Kānpūr to Thānah Bhawan on one occasion. One of his attendants insisted they stop over in Khaurjah for his sake. Hadrat Wālā said: "The people of Muzaffar Nagar have already been informed about the arrival of our train. If we do not reach on time, they will become extremely worried. By the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā*, I have never reached a place at a time which I did not promise." The attendant said: "I can send a telegram." Hadrat Wālā replied: "No. It will still cause a disruption because they would have probably hired a conveyance for us. We do not know if the hired person will wait or not, or whether they will be able to hire another conveyance or not. All this will certainly cause complications. Furthermore, there is always disappointment and frustration when a person reaches later than expected. Had you told me before I wrote a letter to them, it would have been possible for us to stop."

Luggage

Hadrat Wālā would only carry essential items and would have them ready one day before departure so that he does not encounter any difficulty at the time of departure or does not forget an essential item. He would fix the price with the porters before hand because it is not permissible to compel them to accept the price stipulated by the railways. If there was the slightest possibility of the luggage being overweight, he would have it weighed immediately and pay for the extra luggage.

Caution In Paying For Luggage

Hadrat Wālā was travelling from Sahāranpūr to Kānpūr and he had some sugar-cane with him. He wanted to have it weighed at the station so that he could pay for the additional weight, but no one weighed it. Even the non-Muslim railway worker trusted him and said: "Take it as it is, there is no need for you to weigh it. I will inform the guard." Hadrat Wālā asked: "To which point will this guard be going?" He replied: "His duty is up to Ghāzī Ābād." He asked: "What will happen after Ghāzī Ābād?" The man said: "The guard will inform the next guard." Hadrat Wālā asked: "What will happen after that?" The man replied: "He will convey you to Kānpūr, and your journey ends there." Hadrat Wālā said: "No. The journey does not end there. After it is another journey to the Hereafter. What arrangements will you make for that journey?" All those who were present fell silent and were most impressed by Hadrat Wālā. Many other highly educated Hindus were standing nearby and they began speaking among themselves: "Are there still such faithful servants of God who are so cautious and fear Him so much!?"

The railway workers of the nearby towns and villages had so much of trust in Hadrat Wālā's associates that whenever they saw any trustworthy looking person going to Thānah Bhawan, they would not stop him to weigh his luggage. They used to say with full confidence: "He is going to the Maulānā Sāhib of Thānah Bhawan. Those who are going there do not travel without first weighing their luggage."

Rectifying A Student On Payment Of A Fare

A student came to Thānah Bhawan to visit but Hadrat Wālā was leaving on a journey, so he met him on the station. Because there was very little time, the student informed the

guard and boarded the train without a ticket. He purchased a ticket at the next station, Nānauta. But when he went to give the guard the fare for Thānah Bhawan to Nānauta, the guard said: "You are a poor person. There is no need for you to pay for the ticket to this point." When the student came to Hadrat Wālā and informed him, he said: "The guard is an employee of the railway company, he does not own it. So the fare to this point has got to be paid by you. Now this is what you must do: Purchase a similarly priced ticket of this route and tear the ticket. In this way, the company will receive its money and you will absolve yourself of your duty to your fellow humans."

A Conversation With An Aryan Missionary

An Aryan missionary who knew English was sitting in the same coach. He said: "Sir, I would like to express something which crossed my heart. The truth is that when he came and informed you that the guard pardoned him for the fare to this point, I felt happy because a poor person has benefited. But after listening to what you said, I realized that my joy was one of faithlessness."

Some other Hindus were with this Aryan. One of them said: "My heart is attracted to their words." Another said: "This is proof that they are on the truth. They are true people, this is why their words have an effect." A short while later, the Aryan missionary said to Hadrat Wālā: "Can I ask you a question?" He replied: "Certainly." The Aryan said: "There are two people; one is a Muslim and the other a non-Muslim. Both did a good deed with a good intention. Will the two receive the same reward or will there be a difference in it?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "This question is far below your intelligence and culture because you asked a question whose answer is already in your mind from beforehand." He asked: "How do you know that its answer is in my mind from beforehand?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "If all the preludes to the answer are in your mind, the answer too is in your mind. When the result of an essential is found, the presence of the essential is also essential." He asked: "How do you know that the preludes to the answer are in my mind?" Hadrat Wālā said: "Here, I will make you acknowledge that the preludes are in your mind."

"Don't you know that from among all the religions there can only be one correct one? And at the moment we are not discussing which religion is the correct one." He replied:

"Without doubt, there can only be one true religion." Hadrat Wālā said: "This is one prelude which was present in your mind from beforehand. I am now asking you a second question: Am I right in saying that a follower of a true religion is like a law abiding citizen of the state, and a follower of a false religion is like one who is rebelling against the state?" The Aryan agreed. Hadrat Wālā said: "This is the second prelude which you accepted. Am I right in saying that all the excellences of the rebellious one are disregarded solely because he is a rebel? Will he not be punished by the court despite being a man of many capabilities? And is that punishment irrational and unjust?" The Aryan agreed to all points. Hadrat Wālā said: "Bearing in mind that all three preludes are present in your mind from beforehand, the result of them is most certainly in your mind as well. And this is the answer to your question. In such a case, the clear meaning of your question is that I must be able to tell you straight in your face that you are an unbeliever. But our Sharīʿah does not permit us to unnecessarily address a person as an unbeliever." The Aryan replied happily: "I was really wanting you to hear you say this word to me [that is, you are an unbeliever]. There is joy in hearing this word from such a mouth as yours." Hadrat Wālā said: "It may be good for you, but it is most deplorable for me to utter such words."

In short, the Aryan was very pleased with Hadrat Wālā's cultured and sensible conversation. He asked Hadrat Wālā his name and where he lived. When Hadrat Wālā informed him, he said: "I come quite often to Thānah Bhawan to deliver lectures on the Aryan Society. I will certainly come to meet you the next time I come there."

Hadrat Wālā had to encounter all types of people in the course of his travels, so these small debates used to take place very often. Hadrat Wālā always concluded such debates with a few arguments.

A Professor's Silence

Maulwī Dhakā'ullāh, a professor in mathematics and a famous writer, met Hadrat Wālā in Delhi. He asked Hadrat Wālā: "Do you even develop any capabilities in your students in the madrasah?!" Hadrat Wālā replied: "First explain the meaning of capabilities to me and I will give you an answer." He fell silent when he heard this because he realized that if he were to give

an answer, it would be difficult to prove who can claim to a capable person. If he were to say anything further, it will result in an argument and it will be difficult for him to come out of the predicament.

Impressions Of Hindu Travellers

A Hindu who appeared to be a senior personality was sitting in the same coach with Hadrat Wālā. He asked with much admiration: "From your eyes I can guess that you are occupied in some task (referring to the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* and other spiritual exercises)."

On another occasion, Hadrat Wālā began moving from one coach to another under the advice of his companions because they felt that the next coach had more place and they would be able to sit comfortably. As he was proceeding, the Hindus who were seated in the present coach said with regret: "Oh! This place was filled with effulgence because of you, and now you are taking it away with you."

The Impression Of The Nawāb Of Rāmpūr

Many senior ʿulamāʾ attended the debate which was organized by the Nawāb of Rāmpūr against the Qādiyānīs. Hadrat Wālā also joined after his elders insisted on him to come. All the ʿulamāʾ also had a time to go once daily to the Nawāb Sāhib. Hadrat Wālā would also go, but he would sit at a distance with his eyes looking down and remaining silent. Later on, the Nawāb Sāhib asked one of his companions: "Who was that person sitting silently at a distance with his eyes downcast? He seems to be a powerful person because I can feel my heart attracted towards him." The companion knew Hadrat Wālā and personally conveyed the Nawāb Sāhib's impressions to him.

When Hadrat Wālā was about to depart from Rāmpūr, the Nawāb Sāhib wanted to give an extra amount of money for the fare. Hadrat Wālā sent a message to him saying: "The state does not have any Sharʿī right to spend more than necessary from the Bayt al-Māl."

Striking Appearance

Hadrat Wālā was delivering a talk in a major gathering in Deoband. A person, probably from the Sarhad[1] region, was sitting near me. In the course of the talk, he was saying this on several occasions: "O Maulwī! May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you with peace. I came from such a distant place solely to set eyes on you."

There are countless such stories which display how beloved Hadrat Wālā was in the sight of people. How much can I relate here? When he proceeded in a particular direction while on a journey, everyone will look up and follow him with their eyes irrespective of whether they were Muslims, Hindus, Englishmen, Parsees, righteous people or sinners.

On observing Hadrat Wālā's striking appearance, some people from Kabul said in their own unique Urdu: "Maulānā Sāhib! You seem to be from Kabul." Hadrat Wālā replied: "I myself am not from Kabul, but my forefathers were from there."

It is an undeniable observation that even in an assembly of thousands of people, Hadrat Wālā's regal face and luminous appearance would cause him to be the most visible and striking person in the entire gathering. One of my friends composed a poem in praise of Hadrat Wālā in his dream. When he woke up, he remembered the poem. I consider it to be divinely inspired because it applies to Hadrat Wālā to the letter. It reads as follows:

> When there is none to match you, a person is certainly left speechless. You have been selected from hundreds of thousands. This is how a selection ought to be.

A famous modern-educated philosopher wrote the following line of Hālī Marhūm in praise of Hadrat Wālā:

> There may be millions of people like you in the world, but there is none equal to you.

I conclude this section on the beauty and perfection of Hadrat Wālā with the couplet of Hadrat Amīr Khusro *rahimahullāh* and then return to the original subject.

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[1] The area bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan.

I travelled through all the lands of the world. I saw many beautiful people in the process but you are something else.

Concern For The Comfort Of The Host

No matter where Hadrat Wālā stayed, he never approved of imposing any burden on his host nor did he request for anything. In fact, he was not so happy with a very formal meal as he was with a simple and ordinary meal. It was the practice in A'zamgarh to invite a large number of people together with Hadrat Wālā. This was a big burden on the host. In order to put an end to this practice, he made a condition for the acceptance of an invitation: "I will come alone and I will only eat boiled rice and pulse because you people make rolled rotīs which are a bit hard and unsuitable for me."

Rectifying Un-Islamic Customs

During his journey to Bengal, he noticed that the local residents had the custom of coming to him and touching his feet. He put an end to this practice by first stopping them. If they persisted in touching his feet, he would respond by touching the person's feet. If the person felt ashamed and stopped him, Hadrat Wālā would say: "If this is a good practice, why are you stopping me? If it is a bad practice, why do you do it?" After doing this a few times, people learnt of his disapproval and gave up this baseless custom.

It was also a practice in A'zamgarh for a few people to walk in front and move away anyone who was coming from the opposite direction. Hadrat Wālā said: "The road does not belong to anyone. Everyone has an equal right to walk on it. Your action is against the Sharī'ah and you must give it up. You should never do this." This custom also came to an end.

Hadrat Wālā was walking past an English school. All the Hindu children and teachers stood up out of respect. On seeing this, he went into the school, met everyone in a very informal and jovial manner, and conversed with them. They were all pleased and astonished because it was the practice of the 'ulamā' of that place to abstain from even talking to the Hindus. And if anyone did not stand up out of respect for the 'ulamā', the latter would reprimand them.

Another practice was for a few people to run on either side of the palanquin in which Hadrat Wālā was seated. He prohibited them saying: "I am embarrassed by this." They said: "We do it out of love." He said: "Then why are you displaying it to me? Do not walk on either side, walk behind where I cannot see you." When Hadrat Wālā turned around to check after a little while, he saw no one. This showed that they were doing it to show Hadrat Wālā. What could those poor people do, after all no one of authority reprimanded them for such an action. Instead, they used to be pleased by it.

Rectification With Regard To Gifts

When Hadrat Wālā was departing from a certain place, the village headman gave 200 rupees to him after having made a collection from the villagers. He did not inform Hadrat Wālā that it had been collected from the villagers. Hadrat Wālā became suspicious because he did not think the headman could have given such a large amount all by himself; he must have made a collection from the people. So he asked him: "Is this solely from your side or did others join in?" He replied: "It was taken from others as well." Hadrat Wālā said: "A gift is given for the sake of love. If I do not know who gave it, how will I have love for them? You must therefore return all the money to the respective people. Thereafter, if anyone wants to give me, he must come personally and give me with his own hands so that I too can look at him and think of him as my benefactor and one who loves me." The headman offered the excuse: "But you are leaving now." Hadrat Wālā said: "I am going to a very nearby place where it will be easy for everyone to come. Anyone who is enthusiastic may come there and give me a gift." No one came to give him even a single rupee. It was merely a custom and nothing else. Hadrat Wālā learnt later on that the ʿulamā' who go to that place are highly offended when they are not pampered or when they are given very small sums of money as gifts.

While relating these incidents which took place in Aʿzamgarh, Hadrat Wālā said: "I was able to wipe out a few other customs of that place, but I did not succeed in wiping out one particular one. When an ʿālim arrives in any place, most of the people – even young children – come out at quite a distance to welcome him. They do the same when they bid him farewell." He adds: "The people of this area are very capable and religious. Even

the Western educated people have correct beliefs. It seems that they pursue Western education merely to earn a living."

Affection And Concern

Hadrat Wālā would travel to a place only if the people there persisted, and very few requests were honoured with acceptance. But if a sick person requested him to visit him, he would not refuse unless there was some special impediment. Hadrat Wālā's heart would melt on such occasions and quote the following couplet:

> If the weak are asking for you and do not have the strength to come to you, it will be most discourteous if you wrong them [by not going to them].

Many sick people had their wish of passing away in Hadrat Wālā's presence fulfilled. Quite often he would be delayed in visiting the person because of some reason. But this turned out to be a divine decree because the person would pass away in his presence and his heart-felt desire would be fulfilled.

There was an upright and knowledgeable chief in Bareilly who, during his final illness, was experiencing many whisperings of having an evil death. Hadrat Wālā immediately bore the hardships of travel and went to visit him. He gave him genuine words of consolation which caused all his whisperings to disappear and he departed from this world a smiling man.

It became absolutely clear to anyone who observed Hadrat Wālā with an open heart that the affection and concern which he had was rarely found in anyone else. It would make its appearance where there was a pressing need for it. Where there was a need for diplomacy and tact for the sake of rectification, then his diplomacy was in fact his affection. If he were to display affection in the latter case, then although it would appear to be affection, it would have been enmity in reality. A poet says:

> Harshness and softness combined are laudable traits. A surgeon cuts a vein and also repairs it.

Sometimes Hadrat Wālā would receive information about a sick person's desire for his visit after the latter's demise. He would regret this greatly and say: "Had I known, I would have certainly gone to fulfil his wish."

I recall Hadrat Wālā's own statement about his affection and concern. He said: "I may be of a very free disposition but I cannot even bear to see my enemy in pain. When I see anyone in the slightest pain, I feel like removing my heart and placing it before him."

No Special Clothes For Travelling

Hadrat Wālā did not have any special clothes for travelling. Instead, he used to wear the same simple clothes which he wore at home. He did not wear a cloak, overcoat or turban. He confined himself to his kurtah, pants and topī. On one occasion he was departing on a journey with his normal simple clothes. His senior wife advised him to wear a new set of clothes. He asked: "Why? Do I have to show off to anyone?" She replied: "That is not my reason. Rather, the wisdom behind it is that you should wear such clothes on a journey that when your associates and followers see you, they feel satisfied that you are living a comfortable life and that you are not in poverty. If they see you in straitened circumstances they would assume you to be in poverty. This will cause them to unnecessarily think of giving you gifts." Hadrat Wālā said: "This intention is certainly very good." He quotes her words with approval quite often. Despite this, his natural inclination always took precedence over her wise reasoning, and he would journey in his normal simple way.

Hadrat Wālā was waiting on the platform of the Sahāranpūr railway station for the train to arrive. He had a basket of cucumbers placed before him. The excellent quality of the cucumbers of Sahāranpūr was well known, and someone had given them to him as a gift. A villager walked pass and asked: "How much are you selling the cucumbers for?" Hadrat Wālā simply replied: "They are not for sale."

Are You Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī?

He was returning from Pānīpat on one occasion. In order to get onto the sub-route, he boarded a train from Delhi. This train was heading for Shāhid Reh. Since no one was informed in Delhi, there was no one to meet him at the Delhi station. There was just one person who had accompanied him from Pānīpat. A Punjabi man was sitting in the same coach. He asked Hadrat Wālā: "Where are you going to?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Thānah Bhawan." When the man heard this, he asked enthusiastically:

"Do you know Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "My name is Ashraf ʿAlī." The man started looking at him in astonishment from top to bottom, and asked several times: "Are you really Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī!?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Does he have some special appearance which you cannot apply to me?" The man fell silent but was still not convinced because he had heard a lot about Hadrat Wālā and seen his many writings and imagined that if he was such a great scholar, he must be dressing in regal clothes with an impressive cloak, overcoat and turban. Especially now that he was on a journey, he thought that if this is really Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī, he would have a large group of people travelling with him, he would have had attendants at his beck and call. But here he does not even have a single attendant. Although Hadrat Wālā normally had several people with him, and attendants from different places would join him along the way, there was no one on that particular day because no one was informed, and his clothes too were absolutely plain and simple.

In short, when the Punjabi man saw Hadrat Wālā in this condition, he did not believe it was really him. So he posed an academic question in order to test Hadrat Wālā. He replied with a very logical, detailed and scholarly answer. When he heard his comprehensive, concise, eloquent and academic answer, he was convinced he was really Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib. He then accorded him utmost respect and reverence, and considered himself most fortunate to be in his company. When Hadrat Wālā got off at the Shāhid Reh station, the man carried his luggage for him and embraced him with genuine faith.

Saving The Host From Inconvenience And Companions From Humiliation

It was Hadrat Wālā's practice to never accept another's invitation without first obtaining permission from his host. Another practice was that if anyone wanted to accompany him – even if it was his close relative – he would say to him: "You must make your own arrangements for your fare and food. It is not permissible to impose on the host to pay for your fare and food unless he himself requests it." In fact, Hadrat Wālā would carry extra money with the intention that if any poor person was extremely desirous of travelling with him, he would be able to help him with that money and fulfil his wish in this way. I

clearly remember Hadrat Wālā personally paying for a few devoted associates for the long journey to Rangoon.

Hadrat Wālā would instruct all companions to make their own arrangements for food. If a host wished to invite them as well, he would say to him: "You must first request them yourself. If they ask me for permission, I will permit them." In this way, Hadrat Wālā used every way to save his companions from embarrassment. But no companion was permitted to accept a host's invitation without first obtaining permission from Hadrat Wālā. As for informal occasions, Hadrat Wālā would not be too strict; he would give permission.

If anyone sat down to eat without the host's request and joined in merely because he had been accompanying Hadrat Wālā, he would reprimand and scold him, and ask him to leave. If there was a need for more strictness, he would stop the person from proceeding with him for the rest of the journey. If any host intended giving gifts to Hadrat Wālā and his companions as well, Hadrat Wālā would never permit it because it would create a bad habit, and at the same time, save his companions from becoming parasites. Furthermore, they would be saved from such wealth which was not given with a good heart, was given merely because they were present, and they would not have received had they been there on their own.

One of Hadrat Wālā's companions accepted a turban as a gift when he saw the companions of another fellow pious personality accepting similar gifts. When Hadrat Wālā came to know of it, he made his companion send it back by post so that it may serve as a lesson to him. But because the turban had come in his ownership, Hadrat Wālā gave his own turban which he had received as a gift from the same place as a replacement to this companion.

Importance To Congregational Salāh Even On A Train

I had the opportunity of travelling with Hadrat Wālā on many lengthy journeys but never faced any difficulty in performing salāh with congregation. On almost every occasion, congregational salāh used to be performed in the railway coach. I witnessed Allāh's grace time and again when despite large crowds of passengers, Hadrat Wālā's coach almost always had sufficient place for salāh and every journey was undertaken with real peace.

Comfort And Peace On The Journey

Hadrat Wālā undertook countless journeys but, by the grace and kindness of Allāh *taʿālā*, they were always covered with peace and comfort. If ever there was any temporary difficulty, it was overcome very quickly and replaced with far more comfort. I heard from one of his travelling companions that when Hadrat Wālā was bringing his junior wife from Mumbai to Lahore after her return from hajj, his step-daughter who was very young at the time was restless due to extreme thirst. The next station was quite far, and they were worried about what could be done. The train suddenly stopped at a spot where there was a river below. A bucket of water was drawn from it and given to the little girl. This was certainly a gift from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Wālā was invited to a certain place, but when he reached the station, there was no one to receive him. He came back without leaving the station. Subsequently, he made a condition that anyone who wanted him to come to any place must first send someone to accompany him throughout the journey so that he does not experience any difficulty anywhere. However, the person whom they send must not be of such a respectable level that he considers it below his dignity when any task is given to him. He must be an attendant or an informal friend. This remained Hadrat Wālā's continued practice, and it resulted in all round comfort on his journeys.

Guarding Against Worry And Inconvenience

It was Hadrat Wālā's practice not to arrange to meet any person at a particular station from where they would get together and continue on their journey. He avoided this even though the alternative cost him more money. Instead, he would either ask the person to come to his place of departure, or Hadrat Wālā would go to his place of departure. The two would then continue on their journey and would always remain together so that both could be on the same condition. Real worry and concern for the two is caused when one arranges to meet the other at a certain place, and either of the two is unable to reach at the appointed time.

Some womenfolk accompanied Hadrat Wālā on his journey to Bharatpūr. They had to travel by horse and cart from the Mathrā railway station. Their destination was at quite a

distance. If they left late, there was the danger of having to travel in the dark. Hadrat Wālā performed two rakʿats fard of zuhr salāh [because he was a traveller] and departed. He did not perform the Sunnats. He said: "When on a journey, the status of the Sunnah salāhs drops to optional. And when necessary, they can be left out completely. To abstain from practising on the concessions of the Sharīʿah at time of necessity results in imposing unnecessary burden and fatigue on one's self, and it also entails ingratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* to a certain extent.

Remain Firm On Principles At All Times

Hadrat Wālā did not undertake any journey because he was impressed by a certain person's external awe and influence. Nor did he permit any changes to his principles. A Nawāb Sāhib who belonged to a very influential family sent two hundred rupees as a donation to Madrasah Imdād al-ʿUlūm Thānah Bhawan. This Madrasah is running under the supervision of Hadrat Wālā within the khānqāh, and without any announcements for donations. In addition to sending this money, the Nawāb Sāhib requested Hadrat Wālā to visit him. Hadrat Wālā sent the money back with the following note: "Had you not mentioned anything about inviting me to your place, I would have accepted this money. By attaching this request with the money gives the impression that the money was sent to impress me. Although this may not be your intention, it will place a natural burden on me. I will not be able to come to a proper decision about coming or not coming with an open mind because I will feel ashamed to refuse your invitation." The Nawāb Sāhib replied with an apology and wrote: "After you brought this point to my attention, I realized I was certainly very ill-mannered. I take back my request for you to come here, and I am resending the money. Kindly accept it for the Madrasah." Hadrat Wālā accepted it happily and wrote back: "Till now, you were desirous of meeting me. But now your manners and decency have made me desirous of meeting you." Subsequently, the Nawāb Sāhib invited Hadrat Wālā, and he accepted, but on condition no gift is presented to him.

When Hadrat Wālā was about to leave the Nawāb Sāhib's house, his mother who was Hadrat Wālā's Pīr Behen wanted to give 100 rupees as a gift to him. But he refused because it was against the condition which he had made. The Nawāb Sāhib

said: "But this is from my mother." Hadrat Wālā said: "What difference whether it is from the mother or the son; it is from the same house." He said: "Hadrat, if it is really someone's desire to serve another, what should he do?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "I am not a homeless person after all. It is possible for you to come to my place." By the will of Allāh, the Nawāb Sāhib was an intelligent and cultured person, and a member of an old and respectable religious family. He did not persist. Hadrat Wālā speaks highly of him quite often.

After a considerable time, he came personally to Thānah Bhawan and presented three guineas to Hadrat Wālā which he accepted happily and respectfully. It was also a mark of the Nawāb Sāhib's intelligence that he did not give the same previous amount so that it is not considered to be a norm, it does not burden Hadrat Wālā, his mind does not go to the previous incident, and the present money be considered to be a completely different gift. Subsequently, by virtue of the Nawāb Sāhib's suitability and confidence, a special bond was established between the two.

An Incident Related to The Nawāb of Dhaka

I recall two similar incidents. A long time after Hadrat Wālā's first journey to Dhaka (some mention of it was made previously), a delegation of 'ulamā' from Deoband went there to attend a conference. The Nawāb Sāhib extended a very enthusiastic invitation to Hadrat Wālā but he excused himself because he abstained from attending such conferences. But he had to undertake this journey when the elders of Deoband insisted. Nevertheless, Hadrat Wālā still took the precaution of paying for his own fare so that if any unpleasant incident occurs, he can return without any restriction. And this is exactly what happened.

The Nawāb Sāhib had made arrangements for the housing and feeding of all the guests in Calcutta because they had to go through there in order to proceed to Dhaka. A Ra'īs Sāhib who was the Nawāb Sāhib's friend was in charge of making all the arrangements. He expressed his joy at Hadrat Wālā's arrival and said: "The Nawāb Sāhib is most pleased by your coming because he was quite despondent by your previous refusal." Hadrat Wālā asked: "Did the Nawāb Sāhib mention anything to you about the reason for my refusal?" He replied: "He did say something about your preconditions being very strict, and

which he could not accept." Hadrat Wālā asked: "What were those perquisites?" He replied: "One was that no gift must be presented to you." (When relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā informed us that this prerequisite had been made on the first trip, not now. He got mixed up. Notwithstanding this) Hadrat Wālā said: "What is so difficult about not giving me any gifts? It is normally difficult to give something, but not difficult to abstain from giving." The Ra'īs Sāhib said: "If you love someone, your heart naturally wants to give him a gift. How can a person not serve his beloved?!" Hadrat Wālā asked: "Why is it so necessary to constantly call one's beloved to one's house in order to give him a gift? If someone is so enthusiastic, he could go personally to the beloved's house and present the gift, or he could send it to him." The Ra'īs Sāhib replied: "Sir, pardon me, but a thirsty man goes to the well, the well does not go to him." Hadrat Wālā was most insulted by his impudence and rudeness. He said: "I see. You think you are the well and we are the thirsty ones. Whereas we are convinced that you are the thirsty one and we are the wells. I also have proof for what I am saying. There are two necessities, Dīn and this world. You have one of the things which we need, and we have one of the things which you need. But there is a difference: the thing which we need and which you have - this world – we also have sufficient for our needs. As for what you need and which we have – Dīn – you do not even have enough of it. So now who is dependent on whom – you on us, or we on you? Are you the thirsty ones and we the wells, or are we the thirsty ones and you the wells?" The man fell silent and was most ashamed.

Hadrat Wālā was most displeased by the Ra'īs Sāhib's rudeness. He presented a subtle excuse to his companions, left the place, went to a musjid and stayed over with the imām of the musjid. Janāb Hāfiz Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, the ex-principal of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, came to the musjid and begged Hadrat Wālā to accompany them to Dhaka but he replied: "I have already made a firm resolution to return." He boarded the first available train and went to Allāhābād because he had promised someone there that he would stop over on his return.

In the first place, the journey to Dhaka was against Hadrat Wālā's disposition. Then this unpleasant incident on the way was experienced. So the excuse to return became extremely

strong. Hadrat Wālā paying for his own fare at the very beginning really came to his help now. If not, he would have been constrained and would not have been able to return so freely. This is the far-sight which the Hadīth extols, and which is far above the level of an exposition. When the Nawāb Sāhib heard of what transpired, he sent a telegram, but Hadrat Wālā had already resolved to go back, so he did not remain. He sent an appropriate reply to the telegram after reaching Allāhābād.

A judge by the name of Janāb Akbar Husayn Sāhib Marhūm who had a special bond with Hadrat Wālā was overjoyed by his return because he had been against Hadrat Wālā going in this manner – in a delegation - to the wealthy ones.

An Incident Concerning a Ra'īsah[1]

A similar incident occurred after the completion of the musjid for the student's hostel at Madrasah Mazāhir al-'Ulūm Sahāranpūr. The funds for the completion of this musjid were provided by a religious minded Ra'īsah. When the construction was complete, she organized an opening ceremony in the Madrasah. She set a date for her arrival and wrote to the principal informing him to convey the message to the supervisors, heads and other committee members to come to the Madrasah on that day. The principal sent out letters together with an invitation to attend. Hadrat Wālā refused to attend by writing a letter to the principal and informing him thus: "The Ra'īsah has no right to summon us in such an authoritarian tone. It is uncultured to call upon someone in such a dictatorial way. Is this how you call someone?! I am not going to come. Would she have invited a fellow Ra'īsah in this manner?"

The principal persisted on Hadrat Wālā to come for the good of the Madrasah. He wrote to Hadrat Wālā and informed him that it was not her doing, but her secretary's. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "I still have an objection to coming. Why was this matter left to the secretary? She should have personally checked the invitation as is the norm with kings and rulers when sending out invitations." Hadrat Wālā added: "I will not come just because she summoned me. But if you order me, I am prepared

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[1] The word Ra'īs (Ra'īsah for female) refers to a noble wealthy person, a prince, etc. The original has been maintained for easy reading.

to come to you walking on my head." Hadrat Wālā eventually went on condition he will not meet her nor converse with her either directly or indirectly. The principal considered this to be a boon and requested him to come.

Hadrat Wālā went as a guest of the Madrasah and delivered a very impressive speech which was attended by the Ra'īsah as well. After completing his speech, he proceeded directly to the railway station so that the principal or any of his associates do not have an opportunity to say anything to him or to insist on him in any way. In fact, he departed without even meeting Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. The Ra'īsah sent Hadrat Wālā's share of sweetmeats to the station. As a precaution, she asked her messenger to convey to him that the sweetmeats were not from the general distribution but specifically from her own distribution. He should therefore not hesitate in accepting them. She was quite perceptive and feared that because Hadrat Wālā was quite strong-minded, he might hesitate in accepting what had been made for general distribution. Anyway, she realized that there can be strong-minded people among the 'ulamā'.

Rectifying Haughty People

In short, Hadrat Wālā was very particular about 'ulamā' not having to suffer any humiliation which, nowadays, is quite common among the people, especially the affluent and influential ones. Whereas they have no such right and this uncultured attitude can never be sanctioned. This is more so when you consider the fact that Allāh *ta'ālā* appointed the 'ulamā' as the bearers of Dīn, the protectors of Islam and the inheritors of the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*. In light of the current situation and in keeping with the demands of the time, Hadrat Wālā made it his priority to make the proud and haughty ones fully aware of this:

> Do not scorn the ardent fakirs. They are the real kings even though they do not have girdles and crowns.

Although some with warped minds consider it to be pride, but as per the words of Hadrat Wālā: "It is better to be labelled a haughty person than to be labelled a flatterer. Furthermore, in today's times:

التكبر مع المتكبرين عبادة

It is an act of worship to act haughtily with the haughty ones.

There is also a severe need for it because when, in these obstinate and Pharaonic times, the people of Dīn are seen with real scorn and denigration, it becomes the responsibility of the Mujaddid of the time to rectify the situation and to demonstrate that every Pharaoh will meet his Moses.

The fourteenth century needed a reformer who caused the most arrogant tyrants to submit before the truth, made them Muslims in the true sense of the word, and made them accept the greatness of Islam and those who were affiliated with it. If the task of reformation was his duty, it would have been treacherous to disregard his responsibility out of fear of defamation. However, bearing in mind that consideration of ranks is also from among the objectives of the Sharīʿah, Hadrat Wālā never allowed himself to become unmannered. Instead, he would give due consideration even to materialistic influential people, and deal with them in a most cultured manner provided they did not say or do anything unbecoming. His manner in dealing with a person or taking him to task would be in strict accordance with the principles until the other person had no alternative but to acknowledge his mistake. Hadrat Wālā announces openly: "Anyone who claims to be more cultured than the culture taught by Islam must come and stay with me for a few days and see for himself. I place my trust in Allāh *taʿālā* and say that – inshā Allāh – he will acknowledge with his own mouth that he was really uncultured and the real culture is the one taught by the sanctified Sharīʿah."

Janāb Hafīz Marhūm Jaunpūrī was a well-known poet who had very liberal ways in the beginning. After having established a bond with Hadrat Wālā, he wrote in his periodical, *Ma'āl*: "I learnt and acquired culture by staying in the company of rulers and great culturists throughout my life. But after going to Thānah Bhawan, I realized that what I had learnt in the past was actually the total opposite of culture." Hadrat Wālā says: "I take great joy in having modern day claimants to culture to admit that they are in fact uncultured. This is because they consider us, ʿulamā', to be absolutely uncouth animals. Their haughtiness and claims are defeated by this admission."

Consideration Of Ranks

When Hadrat Wālā journeyed to different states, he made it a point – through subtle ruses – to avoid having to meet the governors and princes of those states. He would not go personally to meet them, but it they came to meet him, he would receive them with absolute decorum despite his independent disposition. This was in line with the teaching of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

أنزلوا الناس منازلهم

Treat people according to their ranks.

He would also take due consideration of their ranks and positions in other forms of interaction with them.

The Nawāb Sāhib of Dhaka had invited Hadrat Wālā for the *Bismillāh*[1] ceremony of his daughters. Hadrat Wālā had made a precondition that he will not accept any gift either in cash or kind. On the other hand, the Nawāb Sāhib had an ardent desire to find some excuse or other to present something to Hadrat Wālā. Long before this ceremony, he sent a note to Hadrat Wālā informing him thus: "It has been an old practice in our family to certainly present some cash on the occasion of *Bismillāh*. If I do not do this it will be a serious disgrace for me. I hope you will not tolerate my disgrace by permitting me to present you with a gift." Hadrat Wālā replied: "There can be a very easy way of avoiding your disgrace, viz. I will accept your gift in the presence of everyone and return it to you in privacy. In this way, your dignity will be maintained and my wish will be fulfilled. And I promise you I will never make mention of this to anyone for the rest of my life." The Nawāb Sāhib flatly refused this proposal and said: "Hadrat, I can sacrifice my dignity for your sake."

An Incident In Bahāwalpūr And Khayrpūr

Hadrat Wālā was included among the ʿulamā' who were invited by the state of Bahāwalpūr. They were given 150 rupees each

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[1] A custom of calling a pious person to initiate a child when starting to learn to read the Qur'ān. This is done to obtain the blessings of the pious person.

as *khulʿat*[1] and 25 rupees each as *daʿwat* (a token of respect and invitation). Hadrat Wālā accepted these amounts in the presence of the ʿulamā' and out of respect to the Ra'īs Sāhib. But when he met the minister privately, he returned the money to him saying: "I am returning it because it was given from the Islamic treasury from which I am not eligible to receive." The minister replied: "These amounts have already been recorded in the books of the treasury as payments, there is no way of putting the money back." Hadrat Wālā said: "Very well, if it cannot be put back into the treasury, it must be spent on the local ʿulamā' and students because they are the most eligible to receive according to the Sharīʿah." In short, Hadrat Wālā returned everything, but in a very respectable and beautiful manner.

The same occurred in Khayrpūr, Sindh. There the excuse which was offered was that the Nawāb Sāhib will be displeased if the *khulʿat* was returned. Hadrat Wālā said: "If you fear that this will happen, why should you even inform him? The cash which I received in the name of *khulʿat* can be distributed among the poor because they are its rightful recipients." Hadrat Wālā relates: "Since – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – my intention is correct, He enables me to think up some sort of sensible solution on such occasions so that others are compelled to agree with me and – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – I do not have to be forced into doing something against the Sharīʿah or against my temperament."

An Incident In Hyderabad

When Hadrat Wālā journeyed to Hyderabad, an aged scholar wanted to have the womenfolk of his house inducted as murīds. He tried to obtain permission to bring them before Hadrat Wālā without hijāb/purdah but Hadrat Wālā refused. He eventually resorted to this plan: He seated them in their chadors and, when Hadrat Wālā entered the room for the induction, the elderly man said to the women: "You may uncover your faces, what is the need to observe purdah with him!?" He now put Hadrat Wālā in a tight spot. But instead of Hadrat Wālā entering into an altercation with the elderly man which could not have brought any positive results and the women would have uncovered their faces in the meantime,

[1] A robe of honour conferred by a prince as a mark of distinction.

Hadrat Wālā immediately threatened the women directly by saying: "Don't you dare uncover your faces." So one side the elderly man was telling them to uncover their faces, and on the other side Hadrat Wālā was warning them against uncovering their faces. Since they were seated there for the sake of being inducted as murīds, they had to obey Hadrat Wālā and did not uncover their faces. Hadrat Wālā succeeded in his tactic.

Rectifying A Minister's Daughter

A daughter of a minister from a major state came personally to Thānah Bhawan with her husband. She also wanted to meet Hadrat Wālā with her face uncovered and sought permission for this via Hadrat Wālā's junior wife. He considered it unwise to refuse explicitly because when injunctions of the Sharīʿah are mentioned before free-minded people, they do not have any regard for them and their hearts are not inclined to accept them. In fact, it is not far-fetched for them to criticize the Sharīʿah or utter some words of derision. He therefore resorted to a subtle plan. He said: "If she has nothing to say to me or does not wish to hear me say anything, I will permit her [to uncover her face]." Hadrat Wālā had gauged that she certainly wanted to enter into a conversation with him, so she will not come [uncovered] before him. Furthermore, by answering in this way Hadrat Wālā thought to himself that he will keep his eyes lowered, so there is no problem. But the woman sent a message saying that she certainly needs to speak to him. Hadrat Wālā replied: "I am naturally indisposed to speaking with a woman directly and feel very shy. If you speak to me with your face uncovered, I will not be able to even speak to you. I am compelled by my nature. So if you want to speak to me, it will have to be behind a veil." The woman was forced to accept.

Shame And Modesty

It was really true that Hadrat Wālā, due to his shame and modesty, could not speak directly to a woman. When he used to board any conveyance [like a train], he would look for a place where there would be no one seated to his left because if there was, it would cause a lot of discomfort to him. Moreover, when a train passed by, he would not raise his eyes to look at the passengers as is the norm of the people. He says: "I feel

ashamed to do that." In addition to it being a futile act, the possibility of one's gaze falling on a woman always exists.

Whenever Hadrat Wālā went on a journey, large crowds of people would be there to receive him or bid him farewell. These large crowds on the stations would make it difficult for other travellers to walk pass. The large numbers made it very difficult to shake hands with everyone. So he would extend both hands separately in different directions. People would come forward and, in their extreme love, kiss them on both sides. In the meantime, Hadrat Wālā would turn his attention to each person. The desire to shake hands with him would continue until the train gained momentum and left the station.

General Adoration

Allāh *taʿālā* blessed Hadrat Wālā with so much of adoration in the eyes of the masses that some weak-minded people assumed he possessed some sort of power with which he subdued people. A person said to one of Hadrat Wālā's associates: "If you are unable to at least learn how to subdue people from him, you have acquired nothing from him. He has a very powerful procedure for it." Hadrat Wālā related this to us with a smile and said: "Some people had the same thoughts about Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Consequently, a person sat in his assembly with the same notion. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib received [unseen] knowledge of it, so he said: 'I seek refuge in Allāh. I seek forgiveness from Allāh. When a person engages in such practices, his affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* is taken away from him.'"

Physical Strength And Cheerfulness

By the help and grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā did not experience such fatigue in even lengthy journeys which could have caused obstacles in carrying out his necessary tasks. Very often I saw him travelling the entire night, not sleeping at all, yet the very next morning he would deliver speeches with full force for several hours and also complete replying to the letters which he received. On one occasion, he delivered a speech until mid-night and then sat down to reply to the letters. He had a small rest but it was just in name. I remember very well how my senses used to become confused because of insufficient sleep, but – by Allāh's will – Hadrat Wālā was not really

affected. He would remain engrossed in delivering lectures, writing and replying to letters.

I recall a Maulānā Sāhib saying to me: "Maulānā is most certainly using some herb. Māshā Allāh, he is very healthy. You must find out what herb he is using." When I related this to Hadrat Wālā, he laughed and said: "He is crazy." He added: "Here, let me tell you what herb I am using, it is a bond with Allāh through which my heart is always strong and tranquil, and I always feel cheerful and positive. These are the roots of good health." By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā's health is certainly very good. All praise is due to Allāh, he is always healthy, energetic and cheerful. There is a lot of force in his voice, it is very loud, and I saw extreme power and authority in his speech whereas I had occasions of seeing him after sad occasions and calamities. May Allāh *taʿālā* increase Hadrat Wālā's external and internal health, and may He continue his blessings and bestowals.

Work Continues Even During Illness

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā rarely falls ill. When he does fall ill, he recovers very quickly from even the most serious ailments. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he recovers from illnesses within a few days which normally take others several months to recover from. His work is never affected during his illness; he continues working. Allāh *taʿālā* wants as much work from him, so He enables him to do this. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep it this way, and may He bless him with extraordinary long life with health, wellness, goodness and blessings. Āmīn.

The Ahādīth mention certain virtues and rewards of illness. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred these to Hadrat Wālā through two impediments which are almost perpetually with him. One is the hernia [which was mentioned previously] and the other is vapours which fill the brains, causing insomnia most of the time. Sometimes several days pass in this way before he can get a full sleep. Were it not for Allāh's help, it would have been very difficult to bear. All praise is due to Allāh, he is experiencing some relief in the first ailment, but not enough to enable to him undertake any journey. He is also adopting some measures for the second illness. Inshā Allāh, he will get relief from it as well.

Despite all this, it is not affecting his work in any way. In fact, Hadrat Wālā says: "When I don't get sleep and the temperature in the brain increases, I feel more energized and stimulated, and am able to do much more work." Anyway, he is receiving the rewards for the illnesses, and the work too is continuing unabated.

Allāh-Bestowed Awe And Respect

Hadrat Wālā had immense faith and confidence in the pious elders from the very beginning. This is why he undertook several journeys to visit them. Details in this regard will be provided in the next chapter. He also went on a few journeys for the sake of medical treatment for his wives. He had to stay over in women's hospitals where Christian female doctors used to accord utmost respect to him. Although they were not in purdah and quite bold, they would bow their heads down when passing him, and express their innermost respect and awe for him to others.

Rectifying A Ra'īs

The following is related by Hāfiz Saghīr Ahmad Sāhib. When Hadrat Wālā went to Muzaffar Nagar, a Ra'īs who was extremely audacious, outspoken and refused to submit before senior leaders asked something insolent to Hadrat Wālā. As per his habit, Hadrat Wālā reprimanded him. His annoyance increased to the extent that he instructed the Ra'īs to leave the assembly. But he remained seated. Hadrat Wālā got up himself and said: "If you are not going to leave I will leave because I cannot even tolerate sitting in the same place with such a person." The man clasped his hands like a beggar and said: "Hadrat, you may remain seated, I am leaving." He got up and left.

Later the Ra'īs said to Hāfiz Sāhib: "I have been cured for the rest of my life. I had always looked down at the 'ulamā' and maulānās with scorn and derision. But now I respect and revere every maulānā because I fear he may turn out to be like him [Hadrat Wālā]. I am not intimidated by the greatest of rulers, but I was so intimidated by the Maulānā on that day, I could not utter a single word after he reprimanded me." The following couplet is true:

> This is the awe of the truth, not of the creation. It is not the awe of the one in tattered and torn clothes.

Religious Blessings

Whether Hadrat Wālā's journeys were for medical treatment or personal needs, the Muslims always received religious blessings from him because no matter where he went, people would come in droves to listen to his words of wisdom, and insist on him to deliver lectures.

Eating For Allāh's Sake

Hadrat Wālā was honoured with the opportunity of visiting Makkah and Madīnah on two occasions. Full details in this regard will be provided in a later chapter – inshā Allāh.

When his ship reached Mumbai on his return from his second hajj, a wealthy man began distributing food to the returning pilgrims and also sent some to the traveller's lodge. When Hadrat Wālā's companions enquired about the nature of the food, they were informed that it was for Allāh's sake. When they heard this, they refused to accept it saying: "We are not needy people. We cannot take what was given for Allāh's sake." Hadrat Wālā said: "Brothers, bring the food here. We will certainly accept what was given for Allāh's sake." He added jokingly: "These people will accept it if it was distributed in Satan's name, but not when distributed in Allāh's name." When Hadrat Wālā accepted the food, his companions followed suite. Hadrat Wālā explained: "When they say that it is for Allāh's sake, it does not mean that they consider you to be poor, that is why they are giving it to you. What it means is that they are giving it without expecting anything in return from you, nor do they have any ulterior motives. After all, do the people who distribute this food not know that the majority of pilgrims are wealthy?!"

A Fountain Blessings

In short, every journey of Hadrat Wālā used to be a copiously flowing river of blessings through which various lands were irrigated. Māshā Allāh, even now – although he does not travel anymore – he is like an ocean from which the winds of rains start to blow, and as they rise, they go and irrigate far off and distant lands. While the ocean remains firm in its place.

In conclusion, Hadrat Wālā undertook lengthy journeys over a long period of time through which he rendered the service of conveying the injunctions of Islam. He is now settled in his centre, Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan, where he is seated as a lighthouse of instruction and guidance, and fully occupied in reforming the creation with absolute authority and influence. He is an embodiment of the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh*:

> Quite some time has passed since I have been serving this house of love. I may be clothed as a fakir, but I am doing the work of the wealthy and affluent ones.

MEETING PIOUS ELDERS

Love For Ahlullāh Since Childhood

Hadrat Wālā has intense love for and confidence in the Ahlullāh since childhood. He is so immersed in his love for them that he will relate their biographies and stories for lengthy periods of time in his assemblies. He will take immense joy in relating their stories and would do it with such passion that he himself would be affected by them and also affect those who are present. When relating their stories, he would say: "These are people who are intoxicated [in Allāh's love]. Consequently, their stories intoxicate those who listen to them." Because of these stories, his morning assembly will extend far beyond the stipulated time and he would end up having his breakfast quite late. He often says: "Just mentioning the names of these elders brings life to the soul and creates light in the heart." This makes me think of the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*:

> My name was mistakenly mentioned by my beloved. Consequently, the people of the heart continue perceiving the fragrance of the beloved whenever my name is mentioned.

Studying The Lives Of The Pious

Generally, Hadrat Wālā is not too interested in looking at books, but he continues studying *Tabaqāt Kubrā* – a collection of biographies and statements of pious elders – with much interest despite his many occupations. Since he does not have any other time, he is often seen reading this book before sunset, although it is difficult to read at such a time. Whenever he gets an opportunity, he selects certain sayings and stories from it. He titled this selection, *Amthāl al-Aqwāl wa al-Ahwāl li Afādil ar-Rijāl* (examples of statements and stories of distinguished personalities). He considers the biographies of the pious elders most beneficial. He therefore collated 1 000 of their stories and published this collection under the title *Nuzhatul Basātīn* (a stroll through the gardens).

A Prescription For Creating Love For Allāh

He says with full confidence: "These personalities were true lovers of Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is impossible to study their lives without developing love for Allāh *ta'ālā* in one's heart. Allāh's mercy descends when the righteous are discussed."

Hadrat Wālā has had intense love for and confidence in the pious elders and righteous personalities since the very beginning. These personalities too considered him to be the apple of their eyes. We often hear him saying: "I neither studied too hard during my student days nor did I go through a lot of spiritual exertion in the Sufi way. Whatever Allāh *ta'ālā* gave me was through the supplications and attention of my teachers and spiritual elders, and a fruit of my absolute respect for them." He also says: "All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, I can say that I did not displease any pious personality for a single minute."

Travelling To Meet Allāh's Pious Servants

His intense love for the pious demanded that in addition to visiting the personalities of the Imdādīyyah Silsilah – with whom he had a special and strong bond, and interacted and intermingled quite often – he ought to visit and meet some of the elders of the other spiritual lineages. He undertook special journeys to this end. A few examples in this regard are related below.

Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī

Hadrat Wālā travelled on two occasions to Ganj Murādābād to meet Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*. Hadrat Wālā takes much delight in relating details about these two trips. These have been penned and published in his book, *Arwāh Thalāthah*, under the heading *Nayl al-Murād fī Safar ilā Ganj Murādābād* (fulfilment of my desire in my journey to Ganj Murādābād). Details can be found there. The gist is related here.

Hadrat Wālā's first trip was most probably in Rabī' ath-Thānī or Jumādā al-Ūlā 1310 A.H. when he was quite young, recently qualified from Deoband, and had went to Madrasah Fayd 'Ām, Kānpūr as a new teacher. He resigned from his post after two months because of certain reasons (which were related in a previous chapter) and decided to return to Thānah Bhawan.

When he decided to leave Kānpūr, he felt he should seize the opportunity of visiting Hadrat Maulānā because he did not know whether he will get a chance of coming to this region again. He took a student as his companion and presented himself before Hadrat Maulānā with genuine enthusiasm and love. They did not know the road so they lost their way and eventually reached quite late. The ʿishā congregation was over and Hadrat Maulānā had already left the musjid and proceeded to his room. They informed him of their arrival via an attendant. The Maulānā called for them immediately, and posed three questions in quick succession in his own unique tone: "Who are you? Where have you come from? Why have you come?" The Maulānā's very simple and straightforward tone sounded a bit sharp. Even when he spoke with an affectionate and warm tone, it sounded sharp. Hadrat Wālā answered the three questions very respectfully but in the same concise manner in which they were posed.

He said: "I am a student, I have come from Kānpūr, and I came to visit you." The Maulānā did not know the reason for their late arrival, and it was most difficult to make arrangements for meals at this late hour. So he said in his same sharp tone: "Is this the time to visit someone? A person should at least come a bit early so that food and other arrangements could be made. Now tell me, where am I going to get food for you?" His anger too was based on kindness. Although Hadrat Wālā had a reasonable excuse for his late arrival, his absolute respect, deference and love for the pious did not permit him to present his excuse at this point. He considered it disrespectful and ill-mannered to even bring it on his lips. This really shows his magnanimity and politeness because the seekers of today resort to false explanations for their failings and do their utmost not to shoulder any blame. Hadrat Wālā is by and large angered by such false explanations which are offered by the seekers of today and always complains about their lack of respect.

Hadrat Wālā remained standing silently. The Maulānā asked: "Do you have any money with you?" He replied in the affirmative. He said: "Okay, go to the shops, buy something to eat and leave in the morning." Hadrat Wālā said: "Very well." The Maulānā addressed his attendant: "Take him to such and such place, and house him there for the night." Hadrat Wālā was taken to that place where he began unpacking his goods.

While doing this, he was thinking to himself that he will go to the shops, buy something to eat and depart the next morning as instructed. But a short while later an attendant came in and informed him that the Maulānā was calling him. Hadrat Wālā thought to himself: "Something else must have crossed his heart. Let me go to him, after all I have come here to listen to his talks." He followed the attendant and stood before Maulānā. He said: "Sit down." His tone was just as sharp, but kindness and affection were certainly present this time round. This can be gauged from his subsequent attitude. The Maulānā's tone was naturally like this. This is why Hadrat Wālā says: "He had a simple disposition; there were no airs and formalities about him."

When the Maulānā asked him to sit down, then instead of sitting on the bedstead which was there, Hadrat Wālā sat down respectfully on the straw mat which was laid out. The Maulānā said: "Come, sit here on the bedstead." Hadrat Wālā got up and sat on the bedstead. He did not respond with formalities which have become the norm of the seekers of today. The Maulānā addressed his attendant: "Go to my daughter's house and bring them some food." The attendant departed immediately and came back with the food. There was some curry – most probably pulse – in a bowl, and a few rotis were placed on top of the bowl. When the attendant placed the food before him and the Maulānā looked at it, he became extremely angry and said: "You uncivilized fellow! Is this how you present food to guests? You should have brought the rotis in a separate plate and the curry in a separate utensil. What style is this that you place the rotis on the bowl and present it here?" The attendant came up with a story of not being able to find a plate. The Maulānā said: "You are lying. Are the plates not kept on that certain shelf?" The attendant hastened and came back with a plate. When Hadrat Wālā started eating, the Maulānā asked: "What food is it?" He replied: "It is a curry of pulse and rotis." The Maulānā said: "Glory to Allāh! This is a great bounty. You are an educated person, you studied under Maulwī Muhammad Yaʿqūb."

The Maulānā received divine inspiration as regards under whom Hadrat Wālā studied and also of his capabilities because the Maulānā was not in the habit of treating anyone with such attention; especially with someone as young and newly arrived as Hadrat Wālā. He then said with regard to Hadrat Maulānā

Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: "He was a very good man." The Maulānā was not in the habit of overly praising anyone. So referring to Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib as a very good man was an extremely high praise. It also proves the spiritual bond which existed between him and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib.

The Maulānā added: "You are an educated person, you know the conditions which were endured by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*: They used to eat just one dry date and go out in jihād and wage battle the entire day." When he continued speaking about the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* he went into a fervour and stood up. It was his noble habit to go into a fervour when speaking about pious personalities. So he got up, went and stood by Hadrat Wālā, placed his hand on his shoulder and continued speaking about the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* for a long time. Hadrat Wālā continued eating. They also exchanged questions and answers about the shortening of salāh [for a traveller]. This incident clearly demonstrates the Maulānā's special spiritual bond with Hadrat Wālā, perception of his capabilities and confidence in him.

The Maulānā asked: "Will you have some *ber*[1]?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Yes, it will be a source of blessing because it is from Hadrat." He said: "Leave aside this talk of blessings, do you experience stomach pains by eating *ber*?" Hadrat Wālā replied in the negative. The Maulānā went and brought a utensil which was filled with grafted *ber*. He emptied the utensil in front of Hadrat Wālā and said: "Eat." He then said by way of light-heartedness: "Let it not be that you think to yourself that I ate everything by myself and did not even bother to inquire about the guest." The Maulānā added: "When you finish eating, you must perform your ʿishā and go to sleep. We will meet in the morning." The Maulānā left.

I don't think an independent and free-minded person like Hadrat Maulānā treated any recently-arrived guest in such a special manner because he used to pay no attention whatsoever to even the wealthiest and most influential of people. The following occurred in Hadrat Wālā's presence: A very prominent chief was forcefully instructed to leave. The

[1] Fruit of the jujube tree.

chief begged to be allowed to remain until the Jumuʿah salāh but he was not given permission.

On the other hand, his kindness to Hadrat Wālā increased to the point that when he was leaving the next morning, the Maulānā accompanied Hadrat Wālā to the place where he was staying, had his goods loaded on a pony and bid him farewell. The anger which he had displayed in the beginning was also out of extreme kindness because it was difficult to make arrangements for supper when Hadrat Wālā arrived at such a late hour. Hadrat Wālā requested him for duʿā's at the time of departure. The Maulānā replied: "I already made duʿā' for you." Hadrat Wālā asked him if there was anything he should read [as a spiritual practice]. He said: "You must read *Qul huwallāh…* (Sūrah al-Ikhlās) and *Sub-hānallāhi wa bi hamdihi* 200 times each daily." When Hadrat Wālā returned to Kānpūr, the people there did not allow him to go back to his hometown. Instead, a new madrasah by the name of Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm was established for him. Details in this regard were provided in a previous chapter.

Second Meeting

Hadrat Wālā went a second time after a few years. During this period, the Maulānā would occasionally convey salām to Hadrat Wālā via people who came to meet him. This was most strange for him because he rarely remembered anything. A reliable disciple of the Maulānā related to me that if a person requested him to make duʿā' that he wins a court case, the Maulānā would get up angrily and expel the person from the musjid. The same man would return after a short while, the Maulānā would have forgotten whatever transpired previously, and speak to the man in an affectionate manner. If he mentioned anything about the court case again, the Maulānā would expel him once again. The man would return after a short while and the Maulānā's anger would have subsided, and he would speak affectionately with him. This incident occurred several times. As far as I remember, it occurred in the presence of the one who narrated it to me.

For a personality who is so engrossed with himself to periodically convey salāms to Hadrat Wālā after having met the latter for such a short while clearly demonstrates his special affection towards Hadrat Wālā despite this being in the very early stages of Hadrat Wālā's life. The Maulānā was a man of

divine expositions, so he probably gauged Hadrat Wālā's present and future lofty status, and therefore accorded him with this type of attention.

Hadrat Wālā was accompanied by a few companions on his second trip to meet the Maulānā. It was during the month of Ramadān and the Madrasah was closed, so Hadrat Wālā stayed over. The companions knew that the Maulānā liked soap for washing clothes and tobacco as gifts. The Maulānā used to smoke the huqqah and have his clothes washed at home. This is why they brought tobacco and soap as gifts. On the other hand, Hadrat Wālā was not aware of the Maulānā's tastes. So he carried something which he himself liked, viz. Bengali *perā*[1] which was very beautifully made in Kānpūr, and had a good taste and beautiful fragrance. The Maulānā accepted the gifts of the others in a casual manner without expressing any special joy. But, contrary to expectation, he accepted Hadrat Wālā's gift very happily.

When the gift was presented to him, he remarked joyfully: "This is something of use to me, I make a drink out of it." He instructed his attendant to keep it in a safe place. He then turned to Hadrat Wālā and said: "Did you carry any medicine with you?" Hadrat Wālā had carried a bottle of pomegranate juice which he normally drank when opening his fast. He did not consider it to be a medicine, so he said: "Hadrat, I do not have any medicine with me." His friends whispered to him: "You brought your pomegranate juice." So Hadrat Wālā said to the Maulānā: "Hadrat, I do however have pomegranate juice." The Maulānā said: "You must have brought it for the time when you open your fast." Hadrat Wālā said: "Hadrat, I did bring it with that intention but my heart desires for Hadrat to accept it as a gift." He replied: "Very well." Hadrat Wālā presented it to him and he accepted it.

Hadrat Wālā was forever concerned about respect and consideration for the pious elders. He paid so much attention to their pleasure that when they neared Ganj Murādābād on this second trip, he thought to himself: "We do not have good deeds, and most pious elders can perceive the darkness of our hearts. This is the probable reason for the Maulānā scolding and reprimanding people. This is why we will have to purify

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[1] A type of sweetmeat made with a ball of dough.

and cleanse our hearts before presenting ourselves to him." He performed ablution, sought Allāh's forgiveness, and instead of continuing on his conveyance, he proceeded on foot until he presented himself before the Maulānā.

On the way they met an old man who was also going to meet the Maulānā. It was afternoon, summer time and the old man was fasting because it was Ramadān. Hadrat Wālā and his companions were also fasting. The old man went forward to meet the Maulānā. He asked the old man: "Are you fasting?" He replied: "Yes." The Maulānā became extremely angry and said: "Who asked you to keep fast while you are travelling and that too in such intense heat?" He added: "You must leave right now." Hadrat Wālā feared the same question being posed to them, and so it was. He asked: "Are you fasting?" Although Hadrat Wālā feared he would be reprimanded, he spoke the truth and said: "Yes Hadrat, I am fasting." Instead of becoming angry, he expressed happiness and said: "You did very well. You are a young man and it is most appropriate for you to fast."

The Maulānā displayed more affection than the previous occasion and also related some of his secrets to Hadrat Wālā. The following were some of the things which he said:

1. "It is not something for me to say, but I am saying it to you. When I go into prostration I feel as if Allāh has kissed me."
2. "Brother, there is no doubt about the enjoyment of Paradise and the enjoyment of drinking from the Haud-e-Kauthar (the fountain of abundance in Paradise). But the enjoyment in salāh is unequalled."
3. "Brother, I will only perform salāh in my grave. I make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to give me permission to remain fully occupied in salāh in my grave."

He was relating matters of this nature to Hadrat Wālā when a person came in. The Maulānā scolded him for entering without permission and not looking whether he was engaged in a private conversation or not. This also proves his special attachment to Hadrat Wālā. He then asked him where he would like to stay, in the musjid or in the house? Hadrat Wālā said: "Hadrat, I would like to stay where I can be closest to you." He said: "You may stay in the musjid."

Various types of exotic foods used to be presented to them at the time of breaking fast and also for the pre-dawn meal. It seemed as if he was hosting very honourable guests. This demonstrated his special consideration because he was generally very simple and carefree; there was no room for formalities. When Hadrat Wālā asked his permission to depart after one or two days, he said: "What is the hurry? It is the Madrasah holidays at the moment. Stay longer." Hadrat Wālā considered this to be a great boon because the Maulānā rarely asked anyone to stay over. He therefore deferred his intention of returning and remained there. Since he decided to stay for longer, he sought the Maulānā's permission to read *Hisn Hasīn* to him. He accepted happily and used to provide some explanations in the course of reading this book. At one point, he came to the words

شوقا إلى لقائك

The Maulānā asked: "What is the translation of *shauq*?" Instead of translating it himself, Hadrat Wālā asked him respectfully: "Hadrat should rather teach it to me." He said: "It translates as 'restlessness'." In the course of teaching, he would sing some of the words out of enthusiasm and yearning.

Hadrat Wālā continued receiving the various exotic foods. When Hadrat Wālā completed *Hisn Hasīn* and was getting ready to leave, he said: "Hadrat! Give me permission to narrate Hadīth as well." He replied: "Yes, you have my permission." He added: "You must come again." But Hadrat Wālā never got the opportunity to go to him again.

When Hadrat Wālā intended leaving for Makkah Muʿazzamah in order to remain in the service of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*, he wrote a letter to the Maulānā saying: "Make duʿā' Allāh *taʿālā* makes me successful in the objective for which I am going." The Maulānā replied in one corner of the same letter:

> From Fadl Rahmān. Peace be to you. I pray for your goodness.

It becomes vividly clear from all the above incidents and interactions that the Maulānā had a special an affectionate gaze on Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Muhammadī Shāh

There was a pious personality in Allāhābād by the name of Hadrat Muhammadī Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Wālā was overcome by a real yearning to meet him so he decided to go there. Coincidentally, Hadrat Wālā's father went to Allāhābād and fell ill. When Hadrat Wālā learnt of it, he left Kānpūr for Allāhābād with the intention of serving him and tending to his needs. Hadrat Wālā's father loved him immensely so he was overjoyed at seeing Hadrat Wālā in Allāhābād. Although it was difficult for him to get up, he took Hadrat Wālā to the market from where he bought guavas which were considered to be prized gifts of Allāhābād. Hadrat Wālā's father recovered gradually in his presence and took him to meet Hadrat Muhammadī Shāh Sāhib. He said: "This is my eldest son who qualified in Deoband. He wrote a *Mathnawī* in Persian." Shāh Sāhib heard a few couplets from Hadrat Wālā's *Mathnawī, Zer-o-Bumm*. After hearing them, he made du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to turn the words into action.

Shāh Sāhib was generally lax on issues and rulings regarding which there were differences of opinion. But because he was a Sufi, he did not dispute with those who exercised caution. He believed in making peace with everyone. Because he did not look up to those who disputed on such issues, he disapprovingly asked Hadrat Wālā to translate the following verse:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوْهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعَنَّكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ

For every nation We appointed a way of worship which they observe. They should therefore not dispute with you in that matter.[1]

Hadrat Wālā responded immediately: "Allāh *ta'ālā* did not say:

فلا تنازعهم

He said: "Those who are on falsehood should not dispute with those who are on the truth. The people on the truth are not prohibited from disputing with those on falsehood. It is the duty of those on truth to oppose those who are on falsehood."

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 67.

Instead of being displeased by this reply, Shāh Sāhib was most pleased and made du'ā' for Hadrat Wālā.

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "All praise is due to Allāh, I never blundered before anyone in expressing the truth. At the same time, I was not disrespectful before anyone." Whenever he engaged anyone on disputed issues and rulings, he conversed with utmost politeness and expressed the truth in such a soft manner that his addressee never felt insulted. And if he possessed the slightest justice, he would feel compelled to accept the truth. The following incident demonstrates this point.

Hadrat Hāfiz Sirāj al-Yaqīn

Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib was a student of Hadrat Wālā, a disciple of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and a khalīfah of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. An intense ill-feeling resulted between him and his father, Hadrat Hāfiz Sirāj al-Yaqīn Sāhib, who was a prominent *sajjādah nashīn*[1] in Kursī. The ill-feeling was caused because of differences in creed which existed between father and son, and which eventually resulted in severing of all ties between the two. But Hadrat Wālā wrote to him in a very polite and soft style, and explained the issues to him in a manner which softened his approach and resulted in reconciliation between father and son. Even Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was very pleased with the results.

On one occasion, the father addressed another person in Hadrat Wālā's presence and said: "It was because of him that we are reconciled." Although he was of a different school from Hadrat Wālā's, he was so impressed by him that just through a short conversation with him, he gave up the innovation of covering graves with sheets. Moreover, he differed severely on a particular issue with a scholar who belonged to his own creed. He pointed towards Hadrat Wālā and said: "He is here. Any scholar in the whole of India can engage him. I do not consider any scholar to be his equal." He said this despite Hadrat Wālā's disapproval. He was so overcome with love for Hadrat Wālā that he gave up a life-long practice all at once. This was no small feat. This notwithstanding the fact that he started the

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[1] A spiritual elder attached to a religious endowment.

practice of placing sheets on graves later on because of a dream which he had. Hadrat Wālā went to Kursī with Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib to visit him.

Hadrat Shāh Abd al-Latīf

Although Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf Sāhib held different beliefs, Hadrat Wālā travelled to Sathan to visit him. He was an abstinent person who used to come quite often to Kānpūr to visit Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Shāh Muhammad Sher Khān

Hadrat Wālā happened to attend a wedding in Pīlī Bhīt so he went to visit the famous Sufi of this place, Hadrat Shāh Muhammad Sher Khān Sāhib. Hadrat Wālā requested him to make duʿā' that Allāh's love develops in his heart. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib said to him: "If you want that to happen, you should at least rub your hands together." Hadrat Wālā immediately carried out his order and rubbed his hands together. When he finished, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib asked him: "Do you feel any heat?" He replied in the affirmative. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib said: "You must rub your heart in the same way, inshā Allāh, the heat of Allāh's love will be created."

Hadrat Hāfiz Abd ar-Rahmān Murādābādī

Hadrat Hāfiz ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Murādābādī was a khalīfah of Tawakkul Shāh Sāhib. He loved Hadrat Wālā dearly and had a lot of confidence in him. In fact, he went to the extent of having his wife to pledge allegiance to Hadrat Wālā. On one occasion he came to Thānah Bhawan to meet Hadrat Wālā. I was present at the time.

Hadrat Shāh Abū Ahmad Bhopālī

Hadrat Wālā met him for the first time in Kānpūr. Later on Hadrat Wālā went to Bhopal so he went to his house to meet him but he was sleeping at the time. Hadrat Wālā waited. When he woke up, his attendants informed him of Hadrat Wālā's arrival. He became quite angry at them for not waking him up. Hadrat Wālā said: "There is nothing to worry about. I was sitting comfortably." He said: "But they should have at least woken me up." He received Hadrat Wālā with much warmth and affection.

Hadrat Bahādur Alī Shāh

There was a pious elder by the name of Hadrat Bahādur ʿAlī Shāh Sāhib in Deoband. Although he was totally illiterate, he was of such a high level that even Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to go very often to meet him. Hadrat Wālā was also in the habit of going to meet him. He used to receive Hadrat Wālā with real love and offer him tea.

Mullāh Shihāb ad-Dīn Majdhūb

During Hadrat Wālā's student days, there were two well known *majdhūbs* in Deoband, viz. Hadrat Mullā Shihāb ad-Dīn Sāhib and Hadrat Ghesan Shāh Sāhib. Mullā Sāhib supported a false group on a conceptual matter. But when Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib and his students used to go to him and ask him to curse that group, he would not become angry at them. Instead, he would say: "May Allāh do them good." Hadrat Wālā used to meet him quite often because Mullā Sāhib had been given permission to live in Chattah Musjid where Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib himself used to stay; and Hadrat Wālā had to go there regularly.

Hadrat Ghesan Shāh Majdhūb

Ghesan Shāh Sāhib was a very old man whose eyelashes and eyebrows had turned grey, and who had a very regal white beard. He used to live in a place which was inhabited by prostitutes, and would occasionally venture out into an orchard. On one occasion Hadrat Wālā heard that he is in the orchard at present, so he took a few students with him and went to meet him. But when they reached there, they learnt that he had already returned to his house. Since other students were with him, Hadrat Wālā got the courage and thought to himself that since they could not meet him here, they should go to his house to meet him. Hadrat Wālā had been wanting to meet him since quite some time. They met him in the upper storey of the house, presented some sweetmeats and requested him to pray for them. Shāh Sāhib started off by rendering a lengthy text which they could not understand. They could only catch the ending rhyming words of each stanza. Hadrat Wālā and the students continued listening and left him when he stopped after a long while. Hadrat Wālā could meet him only on this one occasion because he did not

consider it appropriate to go to his house repeatedly because of the type of women who also lived in the same building.

Hadrat Pīr Ahmad

Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib Majdhūb Pānīpattī through whose du'ā' Hadrat Wālā was born was mentioned in a previous chapter. He was a high ranking majdhūb who was recognized by the spiritual masters of the time and also praised regularly by Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He had a son by the name of Hadrat Pīr Ahmad Sāhib who was a man of divine expositions and spiritual ecstasies. He used to come to Thānah Bhawan quite often to meet his followers. He loved Hadrat Wālā dearly and would make it a point of going to meet him whenever he came to Thānah Bhawan. If Hadrat Wālā heard of his arrival, he too would make sure of going to meet him. On one occasion, he left from wherever he was in Thānah Bhawan to go and meet Hadrat Wālā. In the meantime, Hadrat Wālā also left to meet him. On the way he received divine inspiration and turned back saying: "He is on his way to see me."

Hadrat Khalīl Pāshā

There was a famous Sufi in Makkah Mu'azzamah by the name of Hadrat Khalīl Pāshā. Most of the 'ulamā' who went for hajj would make it a point of going to meet him. But Hadrat Wālā considered it contradictory to his unity of purpose to go to another shaykh in the presence of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, so he did not go to meet him. One night he dreamt someone addressing him: "You did not go to meet Khalīl Pāshā?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no need to go because his example is similar to how people come for hajj. Their goal is the Ka'bah, and there are various routes to it. Some people come through Mumbai, others through Karachi. In the same way, Allāh is the objective, and the spiritual masters are the different routes. Since I have taken Hadrat Hājī Sāhib as my shaykh for the way, there is no need to go to any other shaykh. He is enough for the attainment of my objective." The person who addressed him fell silent.

Hadrat Wālā related his dream to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said: "What harm is there? He is a pious man, you may visit him." When Hadrat Wālā went to meet him, he said: "I do not know Urdu. I can speak Arabic, Persian and Turkish. You may speak to me in any of these languages." Hadrat Wālā

said: "I do not know Turkish at all, but I do know Arabic and Persian. I understand Arabic, but cannot converse fluently in it. I can speak Persian and also understand it." So they had a conversation in Persian. He spoke very highly of Indian 'ulamā' in the course of his conversation, and said that they have no greed for this world and are very Allāh-conscious. Hadrat Wālā asked: "Which Indian 'ulamā' did you meet?" He replied: "[Maulānā] Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib and Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib." Hadrat Wālā thought to himself: "Why then would he not speak highly of Indian 'ulamā'?"

I say: Based on the circumstances and subject matter of this meeting, it becomes clear that he was impressed by Hadrat Wālā as well. This is why his mind went to praising Indian 'ulamā'.

Hadrat Sufi Shāh Sulaymān Lājpūrī

When Hadrat Wālā travelled to Rander, Hadrat Sufi Shāh Sulayman Sāhib Lājpūrī met him several times either coincidentally or by coming specifically to meet him. He was a well-known Sufi of the region[1] and was quite aged. According to a Surtī friend, he was almost 100 years old. He met Hadrat Wālā with great affection. I think it was most probably in Surat when he came to leave Hadrat Wālā in a conveyance for quite a distance.

A Surtī friend relates something which he saw with his own eyes: Hadrat Wālā was proceeding from Rander to Surat while the Sufi Sāhib was going from Surat to Rander. There was a bridge on the way. The Sufi Sāhib got off his vehicle and met Hadrat Wālā who was seated in his car. When the Sufi Sāhib reached Rander, he went to a musjid and continued crying for a long while. When someone asked him the reason, he mentioned Hadrat Wālā's name and said: "I do not know what he did to me with his eyes." When Hadrat Wālā heard this, he said: "It was actually his love and humility. Despite being such a respected elder, he said this without hesitation to his disciples."

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[1] Rander used to be a village outside the Gujarat city of Surat but is now a suburb of the city.

Hadrat Qārī Abd ar-Rahmān Pānīpattī

Hadrat Qārī ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Pānīpattī happened to pass by when Hadrat Wālā was in Kānpūr. When he heard of his expected arrival, he went to the station to meet him. Hadrat Wālā read the forty Hadīth of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh *rahimahullāh* to him and received a chain of transmission from him. In this way, in addition to having the honour of meeting him, he could proudly claim to be his student.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Alī Maungerī

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Maungerī *rahimahullāh* was a senior khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and an ex-rector of Nadwatul ʿUlamā'. He loved Hadrat Wālā dearly and had a special bond with him. The Maulānā was also in Kānpūr during the days when Hadrat Wālā was teaching there. The Maulānā lived in Kānpūr for a long period of time and then settled down permanently in Maunger where he established the Khānqāh Rahmānī.

Maulānā Nadhīr Husayn Dehlawī

Based on the fact that Hadrat Wālā was certainly not fanatical, he met Maulānā Nadhīr Husayn Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*, a very senior scholar of the Ahl al-Hadīth, on two occasions. The first time he met him was during his student days when Hadrat Wālā happened to be in Delhi. He asked Hadrat Wālā: "What is your purpose of coming here?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "I came to meet you. I am studying in Deoband." The Maulānā asked: "Where are you staying at present?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "At a relative's place." He said with genuine kindness: "I have a complaint against you – you have come to meet me yet you are staying somewhere else? [You ought to come and stay here]."

A Ghayr Muqallid student was studying in Deoband during those days. He had made some derogatory statements against Hadrat Imām Muhammad *rahimahullāh* so a few students hit him. The Maulānā mentioned this incident to Hadrat Wālā and complained about it. Hadrat Wālā said: "You heard of the incident but do you know the reason behind it?" He expressed his ignorance. Hadrat Wālā said: "He had made derogatory statements against Hadrat Imām Muhammad *rahimahullāh* so a few students got angry at him." When the Maulānā heard this, he said: "It was certainly an improper action on his part."

The second time Hadrat Wālā met him was when he was on a journey and had stopped over in Ārah. The Maulānā happened to come there coincidentally. Hadrat Wālā went to meet him. A zealous Ghayr Muqallid who was seated near him made some unsavoury comments against Hadrat Ibn Humām *rahimahullāh*. The Maulānā reprimanded him saying: "They were great people. We do not have the courage to say anything against them." When relating these incidents, Hadrat Wālā said: "The Ghayr Muqallids ought to learn a lesson from the Maulānā's statements."

At this point, I recall a dream which Hadrat Wālā had seen during his student days. He and some students had assembled on Maulānā Nadhīr Husayn's porch and buttermilk was being distributed. Although Hadrat Wālā had an intense natural liking for buttermilk, he refused the buttermilk which was being distributed there. The interpretation of this dream came immediately into Hadrat Wālā's mind as follows: This group [Ghayr Muqallids] only has the external form of Dīn and not its essence. They are like buttermilk, although it looks like milk, it does not have any butter in it. Dīn and knowledge of Dīn are symbolically compared to milk, as is supported by Ahādīth in this regard. In this dream, instead of milk being distributed, buttermilk was distributed. Although it appears like milk, the essence of milk – butter – has been separated from it.

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to the Ahl al-Hadīth: "If they refrain from evil thoughts and defamatory statements, we could say that this is also one way of the past scholars although the latter scholars differ with them in this regard." He also said: "I have several Ghayr Muqallids who pledged bay'ah to me. I am not too strict in this regard and accept their bay'ah provided they consider taqlīd to be permissible. They may not consider it to be wājib, but they must not consider it to be a sin. However, their hearts do not receive what they ought to be receiving despite focusing on their hearts. There is no doubt in their piety but it is not on the level of adoration because these people generally lack respect. They are by and large impudent and attach very little importance to piety. This results in a type of contraction."

Hadrat Hāfiz Tafaddul Husayn

He was a resident of Bighar, district Muzaffar Nagar and had pledged allegiance to Hadrat Maulānā Muzaffar Husayn Sāhib

Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*. He was well-known in this region and Hadrat Wālā had several opportunities of meeting him. Hadrat Wālā says: "He was a very good person who was straightforward and frank. He loved me a lot."

Hadrat Hāfiz Ahmad Husayn Shāh Jahānpūrī

Although he was a senior chief of Shāh Jahānpūr, he was a pious Sufi who showed much affection to Hadrat Wālā. He cursed a person on one occasion and the man died immediately. Instead of gloating over this supernatural feat of his, he became scared and wrote to Hadrat Wālā thus: "Have I committed the crime of murder?" Hadrat Wālā provided a detailed reply which put him at complete ease.

The gist of the reply was: If you have the power to exercise your will and resorted to this power at the time when you cursed him – i.e. you thought it wilfully and with your power that this man must die – then you committed murder. Since this is not a wilful murder [but similar to a wilful murder], it is compulsory on you to pay blood money and atonement. But if this is not the case, you did not commit murder. However, we will have to see the nature of the curse and what the curse actually was. Furthermore, we will have to see if you had a Sharʿī right to utter such a curse. If you had such a right, then even the sin of cursing is not on you.

In short, Hadrat Wālā wrote a detailed answer in which he delved into all the fine points and provided a different ruling for each of those points. Hadrat Wālā relates: "This was the only question of this nature which I received in my entire life. It proves how particular he was about piety." He held certain views on a few subsidiary matters which were different from those of Hadrat Wālā.

By Allāh's grace, Hadrat Wālā was an erudite scholar of the highest level. He therefore maintained subsidiary differences within the limits of the Sharīʿah. He says: "All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā*, I do not develop any misconception about any Sufi on the basis of subsidiary differences. This is on condition the effects of piety are overwhelming in him. I always have good thoughts about those who engage in Allāh's remembrance even if they are committing certain mistakes. But this does not mean that their actions and statements must be validated with the Sharīʿah. Instead, I find an explanation for the statements

and actions of those Sufis who are overpowered by their conditions. I feel they are excused because of this overpowering. And if it is with regard to matters which are open to interpretation, then the scope for such interpretation prevents me from having any ill thoughts about them. Although Hadrat Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib Pānī Pattī *rahimahullāh* was a Naqshbandī, he took due consideration of the other Sufi orders and said in *Irshād at-Tālibīn*:

Apart from this, the additions (bidʿāt) that have come into Sufism is an error in discretion. Furthermore, the mujtahid is excused and receives one reward. If this principle is not adopted, then not only are the jurists unsafe, rather the entire world will be in severe constraints.

I recall one of Hadrat Wālā's statements at this point. He said: "An erudite scholar must be strict when it comes to his own actions, but soft for others." I constantly observe this policy in Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Shāh Ihsān al-Haq

There was a famous and trustworthy Sufi by the name of Hadrat Shāh Ghulām Rasūl Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in Kānpūr. He was given the title of Rasūl Numā because he had the power to enable a person to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in his wakefulness. His son, Hadrat Shāh Ihsān al-Haq Sāhib, was living in Kānpūr at the same time when Hadrat Wālā was teaching there. He too was a pious Sufi. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Sāhib Maungerī *rahimahullāh* related a statement of his mentor, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, to Hadrat Wālā. He said: "There is blessing in Shāh Ihsān al-Haq's heart; you must go to meet him occasionally." Hadrat Wālā used to go to visit him now and then, and he used to receive Hadrat Wālā with genuine affection and consideration.

Hadrat Abd al-Wahhāb Baghdādī

When Hadrat Wālā was in Makkah Muʿazzamah, he went to meet another personality by the name of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Baghdādī. According to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisah sirruhu* he was a man of divine expositions. He related one of his expositions in the assembly of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. He said: "One night I dreamt that Hadrat Imām Mahdī *ʿalayhis salām*

was performing tahajjud salāh at this very moment on the Mālikī Musallā. When I got up and went to verify this, I saw that Hadrat Imām Mahdī was certainly performing salāh there. I then pledged allegiance to him."

When ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Baghdādī related this and left from the assembly, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib addressed those who were present: "He is a senior man of divine expositions." When Hadrat Wālā heard this, he got up and caught up with him on the way. He shook hands with him and said: "Accept my allegiance on behalf of Hadrat Imām [Mahdī] because I do not know whether I will be living at the time when he makes his appearance, and I might be deprived of this opportunity." He accepted Hadrat Wālā's pledge.

Hadrat Wālā said: "He [ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Baghdādī] either erred in his exposition or the person whom he saw performing salāh on the Mālikī Musallā mistakenly considered himself to be Imām Mahdī. There are some Sufis who were deceived into assuming that they were Imām Mahdī. I personally saw such people who were extremely pious and religious but were deceived into thinking that they were Imām Mahdī. There was a pious man in Meerut who was also deceived in this way. He used to say: "All the birds are informing me that I am Mahdī; why should I not believe them?"

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Abul Hasan

He was a former principal of Jāmiʿ Musjid Sahāranpūr. He was a khalīfah of Shāh ʿAbd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Sarsāwī who in turn was a khalīfah of Hadrat Shāh Ākhūn Sāhib Wilāyatī *rahimahullāh*. He was a Sufi who liked solitude. He would only leave his house to go to the Musjid where he would carry out certain tasks which pertained to his duties as the principal, and then return home. Together with being a Sufi, he was a scholar who saw to the affairs of the Musjid and would deliver the Friday lectures there. Hadrat Wālā's younger brother, Munshī Akbar ʿAlī, was employed in Sahāranpūr for some time. When Hadrat Wālā used to go to Sahāranpūr, he would make it a point to visit Hadrat Shāh Abul Hasan who used to receive Hadrat Wālā with special attention, love and affection. He used to have lengthy discussions with Hadrat Wālā, not on worldly affairs but on the lives of the Sufis and other issues related to Sufism. He used to discuss these issues with real passion.

Hadrat Shāh Abd ar-Rahīm

Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd ar-Rahīm Sarsāwī was the former shaykh of Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Raipūrī. The former loved Hadrat Wālā dearly. Hadrat Wālā went to visit him in Sahārānpūr and requested his duʿā'. He made the following duʿā': "May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you rich in your body, and a dervish in your heart." By Allāh's grace, this is exactly how Hadrat Wālā is and we pray to Him to maintain him in this way. Āmīn.

Sā'ī Tawakkul Shāh

In the course of one of his journeys with Hadrat Maulānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib [former principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband], Hadrat Wālā had an opportunity of visiting Sā'ī Tawakkul Shāh Sāhib Anbālwī. Hadrat Wālā occasionally relates some of the points which he heard from him. For example, Shāh Sāhib took an oath and said to me: "When I engage in Allāh' remembrance my mouth becomes sweet as though I have just eaten some sweetmeats."

Hadrat Maulānā Ghulām Muhammad, Hadrat Maulānā Tāj Mahmūd And Hadrat Pīr Jhandā

In the course of one of Hadrat Wālā's journeys, a Sindhī Maulānā took Hadrat Wālā to meet Hadrat Maulānā Ghulām Muhammad Sāhib Dinpūrī, Hadrat Maulānā Tāj Mahmūd Sāhib Amrautī and Hadrat Pīr Jhandā Sāhib all of whom were well known spiritual masters of Sindh. They accorded a lot of respect to Hadrat Wālā. Maulānā Ghulām Muhammad Sāhib and especially Maulānā Tāj Mahmūd Sāhib joined him on a journey. Pīr Jhandā Sāhib gave a valuable robe to Hadrat Wālā and made the following bequest to his disciples: "When you experience the need to find out about any matter or if you have any mutual differences over any issue, you must refer it to Maulānā [Hadrat Wālā]."

Maulānā Tāj Mahmūd Sāhib's opinion about Hadrat Wālā can be gauged from one of his disciples' letter which Hadrat Wālā received on 27 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1353 A.H. He writes: "I had pledged allegiance at the hands of Hadrat Maulānā Tāj Mahmūd Sāhib Amrautī *rahimahullāh*. I clearly recall his words exactly as he said them. He said: 'Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib is on the truth. Love for him entails love for Allāh *taʿālā*.'

Since Hadrat Wālā is the Hakīm al-Ummat, I request you to make du'ā' for me…" written by Ghulām Husayn, Head Master Chākyān School, Shehzād Kaut, district Lārkāna, Sindh.

Maulānā Muhammad Ādil Kānpūrī

Although he had differences with Hadrat Wālā on certain subsidiary issues, he accorded a lot of consideration to Hadrat Wālā and loved him a lot.

Famous Sufis Of Lucknow

Hadrat Wālā visited some of the famous Sufis of Lucknow, e.g. Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Na'īm Sāhib Firangī Mahallī and Hadrat Maulānā 'Ayn al-Qudāt Sāhib *rahimahumullāh*. They all accorded special attention to Hadrat Wālā. The last of these personalities changed his views on certain subsidiary issues.

Hadrat Wālā's Attitude To Contentious Issues

One thing becomes very clear from all the above incidents, viz. Hadrat Wālā's total absence of fanaticism and his absolute faith in the pious elders of Dīn. As for disputed issues, although he was extremely cautious in his own creed, he was exceptionally open-minded with others and always had good thoughts about them. Maulwī Ahmad Radā Khān Sāhib Barelwī was severely opposed to those on the truth, and his opposition to Hadrat Wālā was well-known. Despite this, Hadrat Wālā goes to great extent in defending him against those who speak ill of him and emphatically says: "His opposition may probably be out of genuine love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and – Allāh forbid – he mistakenly considers us to be disrespectful of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*." Look at his level of forbearance, noble thoughts and attention to preserving the limits of the Sharī'ah, especially after a person has passed away because no one knows in what state he left this world.

His Opinion Of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān

Hadrat Wālā also says with regard to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān: "Sir Sayyid was very concerned and worried about the material success of Muslims. It may well be that Allāh *ta'ālā* showers His grace on him because of this concern." Hadrat Wālā often relates incidents in this regard and also some incidents which

portray Sir Sayyid's faith in some of our elders. Hadrat Wālā says: "Sir Sayyid's belief in the concept of Oneness of Allāh and Messenger-ship was very firm and unadulterated. This is what I gauged from his writings. As for some of his interpretations and analyses of the Qur'ān and Hadīth, it seems that they were done in that way so that the enemies of Islam may not be able to make objections against it. This, notwithstanding the fact that his approach was wrong. This is why I refer to him as an immature friend."

Overpowering Noble Thoughts

Hadrat Wālā relates incidents of major sinners and morally depraved people which prove their love for Dīn. After relating these incidents he says: "In the light of this, how can we speak ill of the person?" He also says in this regard: "You will find some qualities in flagrant sinners which are not found in even senior Sufis. We should therefore not scorn anyone." Hadrat Wālā is always conscious of his own insignificance and unimportance, and these qualities are displayed in whatever he says or does. A person who observes him closely will witness these qualities in him all the time. The above-related incidents which portray his noble thoughts stem from these very same qualities. The injunctions of the Sharīʿah also demand such qualities. Bearing in mind that Hadrat Wālā fully understands the essence and limits of every injunction of the Sharīʿah, he is not narrow-minded. This is the mark of an erudite scholar – he treats every single thing according to its position. This is what is known as moderation on the straight path which – in these times of excesses and failings, and when people are generally transgressing the limits – Allāh *taʿālā* made absolutely clear to the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* through Hadrat Wālā. Allāh *taʿālā* completed His evidence in this way. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to continue deriving benefit from him. This is the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills. Hadrat Wālā says time and again: "It is my constant endeavour to teach people the reality of Dīn. But they consider this to be harsh."

ATTENTION OF THE IMDĀDĪYYAH ELDERS

In the previous chapter we related Hadrat Wālā's visits to the Sufis and elders of the other spiritual lineages, the attention with which they received him and their kindness towards him. We now relate the kindness, attention, glad tidings, supplications and praises of the Imdādīyyah spiritual lineage.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī

The personality who deserves to top this list, whose attention and focus were directed at Hadrat Wālā, through whom Hadrat Wālā – by Allāh's grace – is established on this high level, who is the fountainhead of all Hadrat Wālā's blessings which are being enjoyed by the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the East and West, and through whose pure and purifying water a major portion of the Islamic world is irrigated is none other than Hadrat Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Shaykh al-ʿUlamā' wa al-Mashā'ikh Imām at-Tarīq Hājī Shāh Imdādullāh Sāhib Thānwī Muhājir Makkī *quddisa sirruhu*. Hadrat Wālā has the honour of having pledged allegiance to him.

What a blessed personality Hadrat Hājī Sāhib must have been because merely thinking of him and the slightest mention of him elicit special feelings of fulfilment and ecstasy in the soul. Hadrat Wālā says: "The slightest mention of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib produces such a feeling in my heart that I lose all my senses. Although those who are looking at me may not know it, I am certainly overcome by that condition and I can perceive it extremely well."

My heart really feels like relating Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's special attention and favours on Hadrat Wālā in this chapter, but consider it more appropriate to do it in a later chapter. I am therefore suppressing my feelings, restraining my pen and deferring them for a later chapter. I will now present examples of the focus and favours of other personalities of this spiritual family.

Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muhammad

Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muhammad Sāhib Muhaddith Thānwī was a noted and erudite scholar, a high ranking Sufi and a Pīr

Bhāi of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. He was especially fond of Hadrat Wālā since the latter's childhood. A few incidents in this regard were related in the chapter on Hadrat Wālā's childhood. They are recounted briefly.

Hadrat Wālā was still very young when the Maulānā – by virtue of his spiritual foresight – said: "This boy will take my place after me." The Maulānā was extremely considerate of Hadrat Wālā. His consideration can be gauged from the following incident: There were some ill-feelings between the Maulānā and Hadrat Wālā's father over the ownership of some land. He wanted to send some betel-leaf to the Maulānā, so he sent it with Hadrat Wālā because it was most likely to be accepted if it was given to him by Hadrat Wālā. The Maulānā accepted it solely out of consideration for Hadrat Wālā. This demonstrates his intense affection for Hadrat Wālā. Even after he passed away, he addressed Hadrat Wālā in a dream: "Our focus is still on you exactly as it had been when we were alive."

Hadrat Wālā was about sixteen years old when the Maulānā passed away. He passed away in 1396 A.H. while Hadrat Wālā was born in 1380 A.H. The Maulānā was one of the greatest spiritual masters and scholars of his time, and one of the three who were referred to as the Aqtāb Thalāthah (three leading personalities) of that era. The other two were Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib and Hadrat Hāfiz Muhammad Dāmin Sāhib. These three were Pīr Bhāis who used to remain occupied in dhikr and contemplation in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah, and on account of which, this Khānqāh was given the title of Dukān-e-Maʿrifat (the shop for the recognition of Allāh) by the spiritual masters.

For a leading personality, scholar of the external and internal sciences and Sufi like Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muhammad Sāhib to show so much of attention and affection to Hadrat Wālā was a clear glad tiding of Hadrat Wālā's suitability which – by Allāh's grace – proved to be absolutely correct.

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī

The world is fully aware of the scholarly erudition and perfect spirituality of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu*. He was unanimously accepted as a Qutb al-Irshād. He was the most senior khalīfah of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. When Hadrat Wālā was a student at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, he had

requested him to accept his pledge of allegiance. But the Maulānā excused himself because he considered it inappropriate while a student is still studying, and superfluous to acquiring Islamic sciences. As far as Hadrat Wālā remembers – because it happened a very long time ago – he then sent a request with the Maulānā to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to ask the Maulānā to accept his pledge of allegiance. But Hadrat Hājī Sāhib himself inducted Hadrat Wālā as his own disciple. Details in this regard will – inshā Allāh – be provided in a later chapter.

All we need to mention here is that Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* showed particular attention and kindness to Hadrat Wālā. Although he was far more senior to Hadrat Wālā in every respect, he used to be extremely considerate of him. When Hadrat Wālā had just settled down in Thānah Bhawan [after his departure from Kānpūr], he went to visit Hadrat Maulānā. The latter got off from his bedstead and sat on the floor where everyone else was seated. Hadrat Wālā was most embarrassed and said: "Hadrat, I will not have the opportunity of visiting you very often. I will come as an attendant and you ought to treat me as an attendant [and nothing more]."

The Maulānā removed Hadrat Wālā's embarrassment by saying: "I had been lying down for quite some time; that is why I got up and sat down." He bore Hadrat Wālā's request in mind and did not change his position on future occasions when Hadrat Wālā came to visit him. Despite this, he would unwittingly show due consideration to Hadrat Wālā.

One of his attendants said to him: "Hadrat, he [Hadrat Wālā] considers himself to be an insignificant servant of yours and respects you as if you are his shaykh. Why do you show him so much of regard?" Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī replied: "You may be blind, but I am not." This incident was related to Hadrat Wālā by the very person who had asked the question.

Whenever Hadrat Wālā used to present himself before Hadrat Maulānā, he used to speak about Hadrat Hājī Sāhib with real enthusiasm and fervour. He would say to Hadrat Wālā: "Bhāi! When you arrive here, I come to life." Some people complained to Hadrat Maulānā about some of Hadrat Wālā's views on certain disputed issues. Hadrat Maulānā said: "I do not want to hear any complaints against him because when he does

anything, he does it after considering it to be the truth. He does not do it out of personal motives."

On one occasion, Hadrat Maulānā – in all his humility – said with reference to Hadrat Wālā: "Brother! He ate the ripe fruit of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. (In other words, he acquired the blessings of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib during the final days of his life). While we ate his unripe fruit. (In other words, we benefited from Hadrat Hājī Sāhib during his early days)." This incident is related in Story No. 450 of Hadrat Wālā's book, *Arwāh Thalāthah*, in slightly different words. Hadrat Wālā's commentary to it is also mentioned there. I consider it appropriate to quote the commentary here:

The one practising humility should not be misconstrued as the inferior one. Superior spiritual experiences should not be understood as superiority in rank.

Hadrat Wālā was delivering a lecture in Gangoh. If anyone went to meet Hadrat Maulānā at that time, he would say to the person: "A true scholar is delivering a lecture at the moment. Go there, why are you coming here to me?"

Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* considered interest [usury] in a Dār al-Harb to be permissible. This was in line with the famous opinion of Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*. On the other hand, Hadrat Wālā used to issue a fatwā of caution in line with the opinion of Hadrat Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh*. This issue was discussed one Friday in Hadrat Maulānā's assembly. Hadrat Wālā was present in that assembly. Maulānā Muhammad Yahyā Sāhib[1] who was the special attendant of Hadrat Maulānā and was not aware of Hadrat Wālā's view on this issue pointed towards Hadrat Wālā and said to Hadrat Maulānā: "Hadrat, why don't you permit him to take the rupees which his father left in the bank?" Although Hadrat Maulānā held a different view from Hadrat Wālā's, he said: "Glory to Allāh! How can I stop anyone if he wants to act on caution?"

When Hadrat Wālā's father passed away in 1305 A.H., Hadrat Wālā noted a few questions about the inheritance and sent it to Hadrat Maulānā via a barber. Although the questions were

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[1] He is none other than the father of Shaykh al-Hadīth Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*. (translator)

many and Hadrat Maulānā was suffering from inflammation of the eyes, he answered all the questions. He also wrote the reason for providing so concise answers: "I am suffering from inflammation of my eyes and I am writing these answers with my eyes closed."

Hadrat Wālā had asked Hadrat Maulānā's opinion with regard to the same inheritance: "What if I do not take the properties?" Hadrat Maulānā replied: "If you take them, you are fully entitled. If you do not take them, even then Allāh *taʿālā* will never cause you any concern about your sustenance." By Allāh's grace, this is exactly what happened.

Hadrat Wālā decided to undertake a second journey to the Hijāz with the intention of remaining in the service of his shaykh, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, for six months. At the exact time of departure, he sent a message to Hadrat Maulānā informing him of his preparations for the journey. Hadrat Maulānā sent a written reply in absolute humility: "When you reach there and present yourself before Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, you must remember me." He added this couplet:

> When you sit with the beloved and drink, you must think of your drinking friends.

Hadrat Maulānā used to be overjoyed whenever he used to hear about Hadrat Wālā's lectures and about his Madrasah Imdād al-ʿUlūm in Thānah Bhawan. He used to say: "All this is very good, but I will be most happy when people who engage in Allāh's remembrance start assembling there." By Allāh's grace, this wish was also fulfilled. Hadrat Maulānā was so desirous of seekers assembling around Hadrat Wālā that he would even send some of his own disciples to Hadrat Wālā for the sake of their rectification.

There are many incidents in this regard which Hadrat Wālā takes delight in relating. But we are sufficing with the above for the sake of brevity. Some of these incidents will – inshā Allāh – be related in a later chapter.

Hadrat Wālā himself had a lot of faith and confidence in Hadrat Maulānā. Apart from Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, he did not have such faith and confidence in anyone else. He constantly says: "I have not come across any Sufi who combines the internal and external as he does." He also says: "My confidence in others is based on proof and evidence. But this is not the case with

Maulānā. Even when I think of proofs, my mind refuses and says: 'The Maulānā is certainly a genuine Sufi, what is the need to search for proofs?' In fact, searching for evidence is disrespectful when applied to him." Hadrat Wālā adds: "I had taken permission from Hadrat Maulānā to ask him questions whenever I am faced with any objections pertaining to internal and external issues. But in my entire life I had only three or four occasions when I needed to ask him such questions. I experienced so much of blessings through these few answers that all my other objections and doubts were resolved. There was no need for me to pose any future questions to him."

On one occasion, Hadrat Wālā asked him about the reality of tawassul. The Maulānā's eye sight was fast disappearing at the time so he asked: "Who is the person who posed this question?" Hadrat Wālā gave his name. The Maulānā said: "It is strange that you are asking such a question." He fell silent after saying this and did not provide any answer. Hadrat Wālā considered it disrespectful to repeat the question. Hadrat Wālā relates: "After a lengthy period of time, Allāh *ta'ālā* automatically cast the full reality of tawassul in my heart." Subsequently, Hadrat Wālā wrote a unique and scholarly booklet on this subject. He titled it *al-Idrāk wa at-Tawassul*.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī

Hadrat Wālā had several opportunities of meeting Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī *quddisa sirruhu* during his student days at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. But Hadrat Wālā was quite young at the time. Moreover, Hadrat Maulānā passed away within a year after Hadrat Wālā went there to study. He therefore did not get an opportunity of establishing a special bond with him. Nonetheless, I heard Hadrat Wālā relating some incidents which display the special attention which the Maulānā gave to Hadrat Wālā. Generally, special attention is given to a person who possesses special qualities.

The following incident serves as an example: Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Sāhib asked Hadrat Wālā: "What books are you studying?" Hadrat Wālā felt completely awe-struck by him and forgot the names of the books which he was studying. Hadrat Maulānā then began speaking about other matters so that Hadrat Wālā may feel a bit comfortable and his awe for him may decrease. He then said: "Look, it is one thing to study and another to merely count. Studying on its own is insufficient,

there is also a need to count.” He followed this with an example: “There was a scholar who memorized *Hidāyah*. There was another scholar who had not memorized *Hidāyah* but studied it with full understanding. The two were discussing a certain ruling when the one who had memorized it said: “In which book is this ruling written?” The other one replied: “In *Hidāyah*.” The first one said: “No, it cannot be because I memorized the entire *Hidāyah* and this is not mentioned anywhere.” The other one said: “It is definitely from *Hidāyah*. If you have the book here I can show it to you.” A copy of *Hidāyah* was brought and he showed him an extract which was not in exactly the same words as their discussion but the ruling was certainly derived from this extract. After the second one explained it, the first one had to admit that it was definitely a ruling from *Hidāyah*. He said with utmost regret: “It is you who have really learnt *Hidāyah*. As for me, it is as if I did not even study it; what is the benefit of mere memorization?”

After relating this incident, Hadrat Maulānā said: “This is the difference between studying and counting.”

A traveller came to Deoband on one occasion. He was accompanied by his son who was a qārī. He had his son render a recitation of the Qur’ān in Chattah Musjid. Hadrat Maulānā was present among those who were listening to his recitation; and so was Hadrat Wālā. When the qārī completed his recitation, it was most probably Hadrat Maulānā who asked Hadrat Wālā to render a recitation as well. Hadrat Wālā carried out his instruction.

Janāb Mullā Mahmūd Sāhib Deobandī was one of Hadrat Wālā’s teachers. He had a very forbearing and tolerant disposition. One day, contrary to the norm, he became quite angry at a student and, in his anger, extended his hand to hit him. But the student ducked and Mullā Sāhib’s hand hit the ground. Instead of the student getting hurt, Mullā Sāhib got injured and the student was saved. When Mullā Sāhib tried to hit him a second time, the boy got up and ran. Mullā Sāhib took his shoe and flung it at the boy but it missed him. Incidentally, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib was nearby. When he heard the commotion, he came, called for Hadrat Wālā and asked him what had transpired. When Hadrat Wālā related the incident to him, he laughed profusely and said: “I always thought Mullā Sāhib had only three elements in

him - water, air and earth - and that the fourth element – fire – did not exist in him. But today I have come to realize that he also possesses the fourth element.”[1]

Due to his enthusiasm, Hadrat Wālā used to occasionally attend Hadrat Maulānā’s *Jalālayn* lessons. Hadrat Wālā relates: “His explanations used to be extremely intricate and I could not understand anything. Not understanding them at that time was understandable [because I was a young student]. Even now I do not understand his writings. I can understand a little at the beginning, but once he starts providing his proofs, brings in subsidiary points, interjectory sentences and so on, then I cannot understand anything. And I cannot bear the difficulty of reflecting and scrutinizing, so I am deprived from benefiting from his writings. I pacify myself by saying: ‘There are many other simple books for learning the essentials of Dīn, why are you bearing this difficulty?’ It is my habit not to bear too much trouble in trying to understand a particular subject. If I understand something through a casual reading, well and good. If not, I leave it. I practise on the saying:

إذا لم تستطع شيئا فدعه

If you do not understand a particular thing, leave it.

Moreover, by leaving aside the difficult path and choosing the easier one, I am practising on the following Hadīth:

ما خيّر صلى الله عليه وسلم في أمرين إلا اختار أيسرهما

Whenever Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam *had a choice between two matters, he would opt for the easier one.*

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya’qūb

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya‘qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the most senior teacher at Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband. In addition to his outstanding teaching capabilities and expertise in the external sciences, he was a man of spiritual excellences, divine expositions, supernatural feats and an illustrious Sufi of his time. He was from among the senior khulafā’ of Hadrat Shaykh

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[1] Muslim philosophers are of the opinion that all bodies in this world – mineral, plant or animal – are composed of four elements. These are known as *al-‘anāsir al-arba‘ah*. (Translator)

al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*. He was the most special of Hadrat Wālā's teachers, the most beloved and the most respected in his eyes. He used to give very special attention to Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Wālā himself had full confidence in him and loved him. When Hadrat Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* began conducting Hadīth lessons in Gangoh, many students went to study under him and they urged Hadrat Wālā to join them because they felt Hadrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib stayed absent from classes quite often, although – when he did come to teach – he used to satisfy the students fully. Hadrat Wālā said to them: "Although I realize that the Hadīth lessons will be better there [in Gangoh], I consider it disloyal to leave my teacher Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib. I cannot leave him unless he himself says to me: 'My treasure of knowledge has now finished. I will not be able to teach you anything more.'" Hadrat Wālā had this quality of loyalty since childhood. When he was memorizing the Qur'ān, his father wanted to change his teacher for some reason, but Hadrat Wālā refused and said that he will study under none other than his present teacher. His father was compelled to retain his teacher.

In short, Hadrat Wālā had full confidence in Hadrat Maulānā and loved him dearly. Hadrat Maulānā too was most affectionate towards him.

Hadrat Maulānā had gauged Hadrat Wālā's Allāh-bestowed intelligence and enthusiasm. He would therefore explain intricate points and provide elaborate academic details in his presence. This is why Hadrat Wālā remembers many of Hadrat Maulānā's unique and rare statements to this day and takes real delight in quoting them.

Due to his special relationship with Hadrat Wālā, whenever Hadrat Maulānā was in real need, he would take a loan from Hadrat Wālā and pay it back when he received his salary. He had full confidence in Hadrat Wālā's capabilities and so, he used to delegate the task of issuing fatwās to him while he was still a student. He occasionally appointed Hadrat Wālā to be the imām for salāh. Hadrat Wālā still remembers one incident in this regard. He asked Hadrat Wālā to perform the zuhr salāh on a particular day. Hadrat Wālā excused himself by saying: "Hadrat, I have not performed the Sunnah salāh of zuhr as

yet." He replied: "We are going to follow you in the fard salāh not in the Sunnah salāh!"

Hadrat Wālā also relates some incidents related to helping Hadrat Maulānā in issuing fatwās. One of those incidents is related here. On one occasion, he received a very lengthy question, and he too provided a very lengthy, detailed and fully-referenced reply. After completing it, he gave it to Maulānā to check. He read the entire question and answer, and placed his signature of approval on it. But at the same time, he said to Hadrat Wālā: "It seems you have a lot of time on your hands. I would like to see the time when heaps of letters will be placed before you and how you will provide such lengthy replies."

Eventually this is exactly what happened. Heaps upon heaps of letters are before Hadrat Wālā on a daily basis. He provides extremely short replies but which are most comprehensive, absolutely sufficient and encompass all angles of the question.

Hadrat Maulānā gave the following glad tiding as an interpretation to a dream which Hadrat Wālā had seen: "Inshā Allāh the world will fall at your feet and follow you but you will not even turn your gaze towards it." He interpreted another dream as follows: "Inshā Allāh you will acquire honour of Dīn and this world." By Allāh's grace, both glad tidings were materialized.

Hadrat Maulānā had given another glad tiding while in the company of a small group: "Inshā Allāh, you alone shall remain. The rest of the field will be empty."

The background to the above statement was given in detail in a previous chapter. All praise is due to Allāh, this glad tiding also proved to be true. Hadrat Wālā was the noblest of the 'ulamā' no matter where he went.

Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn

Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib Dehlawī Muhājir Madanī *rahimahullāh*. The latter was one of the teachers of our elders, Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib was a principal at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and most probably benefited from the company of Hadrat Shaykh al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam as well.

Although Hadrat Maulānā did not acquire the external sciences, he was a distinguished Sufi. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib said with regard to him: "The only difference between Maulānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī is that Maulānā Gangohī is an ʿālim while the former is not. As for their spiritual affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā*, they are on the same level."

He possessed great organizational skills. He organized a graduation ceremony on one occasion. Hadrat Wālā said to him: "You are organizing such a huge gathering but I do not see the slightest worry and anxiety in you. You are making all the arrangements very calmly and peacefully, and all the work is being accomplished in an excellent manner." The Maulānā replied: "This is just a small gathering. If I were given the Sultanate – inshā Allāh – I would run it with the same ease, tranquillity and excellent manner."

Hadrat Wālā received special attention from the Maulānā. He was sitting on the foot-side of a bedstead with very little space remaining. When Hadrat Wālā, out of respect, went to sit on the foot-side, the Maulānā held his hand and tried to seat him on the head-side. Hadrat Wālā began excusing himself. The Maulānā said: "You ought to obey your elders. Respect demands that you sit where they seat you." Hadrat Wālā carried out his order and sat on the head-side despite feeling quite embarrassed.

It was probably on the same occasion when the Maulānā related the story of Dārā Shikwah and ʿĀlamgīr. The story is as follows: Both of them took turns in going to a Sufi to request him to supplicate for the throne and crown in their favour. Dārā Shikwah reached first. He was quite extreme in his faith in the Sufis. When this Sufi asked him to sit in the place which was normally reserved for him, he – out of extreme respect – refused to sit although the Sufi persisted in asking him. Instead, he sat on the carpet which was laid out on the floor. When he requested the Sufi to pray in his favour so that he receives the throne, the Sufi said: "I was wanting to seat you on the throne but you refused." The Sufi refused to supplicate in his favour. Dārā Shikwah returned sorrowfully, but concealed this incident so that ʿĀlamgīr does not come to know of it. ʿĀlamgīr then presented himself before the Sufi. He requested him to sit in his place, and ʿĀlamgīr went and sat down without

any hesitation. When he requested the Sufi to pray in his favour for the throne and crown, he replied: “You are already sitting on it. As for the crown, I have no control over it. That depends on a certain servant of yours. If he places a turban or hat on your head with his own hands, you will receive the crown as well.” ʿĀlamgīr said: “What! Is he of such a high level. Anyway, he is only a servant; it will not be difficult at all to get him to place a turban on my head. He will carry out my order immediately. How can he ever refuse?” The Sufi said: “Do not rely on that. He is not your servant, he is the king.”

When ʿĀlamgīr returned to his palace, he summoned the servant immediately and instructed him to bring water and to pour it for him while he performs ablution. When he completed his ablution, he instructed the servant: “My hands are wet. Pick up that turban and place it on my head.” The servant clasped his hands and said: “Sir, how can a person like me even touch your turban?” ʿĀlamgīr responded in an angry tone: “I am ordering you, you will have to do it.” The servant excused himself again. ʿĀlamgīr asked him several times, and he respectfully refused each time. ʿĀlamgīr was eventually forced to pick it up and place it on his head. He began cursing the Sufi for having humiliated him in this way. The moment ʿĀlamgīr placed the turban on his head, the servant said: “Sir, I now take your leave. This was my last service which I rendered to you. I cannot work here any longer.” ʿĀlamgīr said: “My mission has been accomplished. I cannot even take any service from you now. You may leave as you wish.”

I feel that it is not far-fetched to conclude from the incident of the Maulānā asking Hadrat Wālā to sit at the head-side and then relating the incident of ʿĀlamgīr that he was giving the glad tidings of religious distinction to Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Wālā used to join the Maulānā’s circle of attention and found it to be most effective. He felt as if he was pure and clean like an angel. Hāfiz ʿAbd al-Karīm Sāhib was a chief of Lāl Kurtī, Meerut, and a Pīr Bhāi of the Maulānā. (Hāfiz ʿAbd al-Karīm Sāhib knew Hadrat Wālā very well because Hadrat Wālā’s father was in-charge of the chiefdom of Meerut). Anyway, he came to visit the Maulānā in Deoband. He was astonished when he saw the appearance and dressing of Hadrat Wālā, and his studious nature. He remarked to

Maulānā Rafī‘ ad-Dīn Sāhib: "Hadrat, you have made the boys totally immersed in their shaykhs."

The Maulānā took Hadrat Wālā with him to Sirhind and took him to visit the grave of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*. On this journey, he also took him to Barās, Patyālah, where – according to an exposition experienced by certain elders – the graves of a few Prophets *‘alayhimus salām* are situated.

The Maulānā also appointed Hadrat Wālā as an imām in his musjid. But then Hadrat Wālā felt it most disrespectful to be an imām while a senior personality like Maulānā follows him in the salāh. So in order to save himself from the Maulānā's insistence, he began performing his salāh in Chattah Musjid. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya‘qūb Sāhib used to lead the salāh here, while Hadrat Hājī Sayyid Muhammad ‘Ābid Sāhib used to lead it in his absence. But when Hadrat Wālā began performing his salāh here, Hājī Sāhib began asking him to lead the salāh in Maulānā Ya‘qūb's absence. Maulānā Ya‘qūb Sāhib himself would occasionally ask Hadrat Wālā to lead the salāh.

We can gauge from this incident that the elders considered Hadrat Wālā to be a very righteous person even during his student days. Hadrat Wālā's respect for them is also apparent.

Shaykh al-Hind Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan

Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh* was the illustrious student of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* and an exceptional khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He was from among Hadrat Wālā's special teachers under whom Hadrat Wālā studied many books during his student days in Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband. During those days, the Maulānā was a fourth level teacher and eventually progressed to a first level teacher.

His academic and practical achievements are well known and accepted. Some of these are related in Hadrat Wālā's book, *Dhikr Mahmūd*, which he wrote on the Maulānā's life. Although he was such a distinguished scholar, he addresses Hadrat Wālā in glowing terms in two letters which he wrote to him. These letters will be quoted soon. In the first letter he addresses him as: "An embodiment of virtue and perfection. May Allāh *ta‘ālā* honour you and place you above most people."

He addresses him in the second letter as: “A treasure house of virtues and blessings. May your shadow remain eternal.”

Hadrat Wālā was hosting a graduation ceremony at Jāmi‘ al-‘Ulūm Kānpūr and Hadrat Maulānā was asked to participate. Hadrat Wālā requested him to deliver a talk but he excused himself with absolute humility by saying: “This is totally inappropriate because it will cause your humiliation. The people will say: ‘Look at his teacher!’ And there is a possibility of the popularity which you enjoy not remaining the same. I therefore consider it unwise to deliver a talk.” He only agreed after Hadrat Wālā persisted repeatedly.

The two had different opinions with regard to the political movements. Despite this, he maintained the affectionate relationship which he had with Hadrat Wālā. In fact, despite Hadrat Wālā’s differences with him on this subject, the opposition’s constant efforts to foment trouble and confusion between the two, and Hadrat Wālā remaining firm on his views; he praised Hadrat Wālā by saying: “I am proud and happy to say that those who are totally aloof from the present movements are also from among us.”

This clearly shows that the Maulānā considered the issue to be open to different interpretations, if not he would have never spoken in praise of non-participation. This was also the reason why the Maulānā always defended Hadrat Wālā against those who made objections to his non-participation in the political movements. He constantly spoke in praise of Hadrat Wālā’s good intentions and religious services, and stopped those who were short-sighted from levelling objections against Hadrat Wālā. In fact, on one occasion he said to a Pānīpattī scholar: “Brother! We do not like disputes within our own people. So let me do this, I will change my views a bit and agree with him [Hadrat Wālā] on this issue. After all, I have not received any divine revelation through which I could claim that my view is the correct one.”

Hadrat Wālā too would always show utmost respect to the Maulānā and would present himself before him with absolute deference. He used to speak highly of the Maulānā’s sincerity, selflessness, services to Islam and the Muslims, and his other academic and practical achievements. He used to take much delight in speaking about these aspects, and still does.

It becomes absolutely clear that these differences were based on independent interpretations. Apart from this, both personalities desired the wellbeing of Islam and Muslims. Differences on such interpretational matters between teacher and student have been the continued practice of the illustrious imāms of the past and the pious predecessors; and they are proofs of absolute integrity.

In short, the differences which existed between Hadrat Wālā and Hadrat Maulānā as regards political movements were based on total sincerity and solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. They were not based on personal motives like other claimants to leadership and authority.

We now quote a few extracts from *Dhikr Mahmūd* which would shed some light on the bond which existed between Hadrat Wālā and Hadrat Maulānā. Hadrat Wālā is speaking in the first person.

The first time I had an opportunity of meeting Hadrat was when I went to Deoband as a student. From among the various prescribed books, I was taught *Mullā Hasan* and *Mukhtasar Maʿānī* by the Maulānā. This was towards the end of 1295 A.H., i.e. in the month of Dhū al-Qaʿdah. The Maulānā was teacher number four at the time. Teacher number one was Hadrat Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib, teacher number two was Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib, and teacher number three was Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Mahmūd Sāhib. May Allāh shower His mercy on them all.

I studied several books under the Maulānā right until I completed my studies. Apart from the previously-mentioned books, I clearly remember studying the following books under him: *Hamdullāh; Mīr Zāhid Risālah; Mīr Zāhid Mullā Jalāl;* several Hadīth books whose details are given in *Sabʿah Sayyārah*; and *Hidāyah Ākhirayn*. There are others which I could recall if I were to think about it carefully.

During my student days, I was very enthusiastic about debating with people from every creed. But now I detest it as much as I was enthusiastic about it previously. There was a time in Deoband when a string of Christian missionaries would come one after another and deliver speeches in the market places and bazaars. The moment I heard about the arrival of any of them, I would go and speak to them. On one occasion, a

senior priest who was a European arrived with a large entourage. They pitched a huge tent in the park next to the station. I, together with a few students, reached there and began conversing with them. Someone informed Hadrat Maulānā. Look at his high level of affection. He came personally to the park solely because he thought we were still young and inexperienced, and we might be intimidated by the missionaries. He came in, moved me aside, and engaged the priest. The priest asked Hadrat Maulānā his name. He said: "Nanhā." He thought the Maulānā must be some insignificant fellow, so he got ready to converse with him.

I clear remember that in the course of the discussion, the priest said that 'Īsā *'alayhis salām* is the word of Allāh. When Maulānā asked him to explain what it means, he could not explain it. The Maulānā jokingly listed to him the different categories of "words" and the sub-categories of those categories. Eventually the priest's Ma'am realized what was happening. She sent a note calling him aside. He considered it to be a lifesaver and retreated. We all returned happily to the Madrasah.

I received a letter from Hadrat Maulānā in which he addressed me by the titles "Makhdūm wa Mukarram" (respected and honourable). I was most embarrassed, expressed my embarrassment in a reply to him and requested him not to use such words for me. However, he used the same words in his next letter to me. I replied: "Since my request has not been fulfilled, I gauge that Hadrat's comfort lies in using those words even though they are embarrassing to me. I consider Hadrat's comfort to be more important than my own, so Hadrat may now use whatever words Hadrat wants to – I will bear them."

Hadrat's blessed letters

It is either due to my shortcoming or lack of courage that I had very few occasions to correspond with Hadrat. The few times which I did write to him and the replies which I received were not preserved by myself. At present, I can recall only three letters. One was his reply to a question which I had sent regarding tafsīr. This letter has been published towards the end of the fourth volume of *Fatāwā Imdādīyyah*. The reader can refer to it there. The other two contain minor themes. I am quoting them here for the sake of blessings. These letters are more than enough to prove Hadrat's humility and kindness.

An embodiment of virtue and perfection. May Allāh *taʿālā* honour you and place you above most people.

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāh

I experienced the urge to enquire about your wellbeing on several occasions, and also learnt about it verbally from people who came to visit me. May Allāh *taʿālā* maintain you and all your associates on goodness. Presently I met a Bengali brother, ʿAbd al-Majīd, who is returning to India and intends visiting you.

I considered it to be an excellent opportunity to send this letter with him. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, this servant and all his companions are very well and experiencing absolute peace. I came to Makkah Muʿazzamah in the beginning of Rajab and I am still here. I hope you will not forget to pray for the success and good death of this distant and miserable fellow. I cannot say anything about my future plans of where I am going to be staying. Kindly convey my salām to Maulwī Shabbīr ʿAlī Sāhib, Maulwī Muhammad Zafar Sāhib, Maulwī ʿAbdullāh Sāhib and others.

I am most saddened by the demise of Maulānā Maulwī Muhammad Yahyā Sāhib and Maulānā Qamar ad-Dīn Sāhib. To Allāh we belong. May Allāh *taʿālā* shower His blessings on them. Peace to you and to those who are with you.

That is all.
This servant, Mahmūd, *may Allāh pardon him.*

Convey my salām to Munshī Rafīq Ahmad Sāhib. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless his periodical with progress.

Makkah Muʿazzamah
12 Muharram, Wednesday.

□

A treasure house of virtues and blessings. May your shadow remain eternal.

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh.

Your letter brought immense joy and gratitude to me. Whatever we are enjoying is a result of the prayers of respected and sincere people. May Allāh *taʿālā* perpetuate their blessings.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, my companions, associates and myself are well. Convey salām to all.

Peace to you and to those who are with you.

That is all.
This servant, Mahmūd, *may Allāh pardon him.*
Deoband.
2nd Shawwāl, Sunday.

An example of Hadrat's impartiality, defence of the truth and concern for Dīn can be gauged from the following incident. The chief of a town and an ʿālim who was of our thinking held a function to which I was invited, and so was Hadrat Maulānā and several other seniors. On reaching there, I gauged that no innovative customs were followed. And why should there be when the host himself was against innovations? However, an invitation had been extended to the entire tribe. I, based on my previous experience, considered this to be a custom of trying to outdo each other and one family showing off to the other. Those of our seniors who were overpowered by noble thoughts were a bit lenient in this regard [but I was not]. Consequently, based on our different approaches to the issue, I returned home without participating in the function while the other seniors participated in it.

There was quite an uproar among our own circles as regards my action. When someone asked me about our differences on the issue, I replied while giving full consideration to the respect which our seniors deserved. But the strange thing is that when Hadrat Maulānā was asked about it, then despite having no need whatsoever to show any consideration to my views, he gave a reply which accorded full consideration to my views. It is worth pondering over. He said: "The fact of the matter is that we do not have the knowledge which he [referring to myself] has with regard to the evils which are prevalent among the masses. This is why he exercised caution. As the Persian saying goes: "If I were to give my life for just this one point, it would be a worthy cause." Hadrat Maulānā's reply was related to me by some reliable people.

There is another story which portrays Hadrat's impartiality, defence of the truth and consideration. I will conclude *Dhikr Mahmūd* with it. When Hadrat Maulānā returned from Malta, he expressed certain specific views to a few special associates on some very special issues. He took a personal part in them because it was done solely out of sincerity and as a service to Islam and Muslims. The issues were independent judgements and open to interpretations. There is therefore a leeway for differences. Some aspects certainly contained elements of worldly and religious dangers and had to be abstained from according to the Sharī'ah.

Bearing in mind these dangers and harms, some 'ulamā' did not participate in these movements. I myself agreed with those who were of the view of non-participation. Many of those who went to extremes in their love, considered our non-participation to be a direct opposition to Hadrat. But look at Hadrat's own response to the situation. When I went to Deoband, I was accompanied by a friend from A'zam Garh who was also a student of Hadrat. He related to me: "I said to Hadrat: 'Ashraf is presently here in Deoband. If you were to discuss these issues with him, he will probably change his views and agree with your views.' Hadrat replied: 'No. That would be most improper. It is most inappropriate to discuss such issues with a person who respects me. Moreover, a person's views and opinions do not change through a mere discussion. They change through incidents and events." Allāhu Akbar! Look at his level of impartiality and consideration.

On the same subject, a person was present in Deoband when some people were complaining about me. Hadrat gave them a hearing and said: "I am most saddened that you are complaining to me about a person when I consider him to be …" (Hadrat Maulānā used some very laudable words which are far beyond my rank, and I am therefore not mentioning them here). He also said: "Do you think all my actions are done after receiving divine revelation? I have a certain view and he [referring to me] has his own unique view. Why should there be any objections and complaints about this?"

Some people wanted to bring Hadrat to Thānah Bhawan in order to strengthen these movements. When they forwarded their request to him, he replied: "He [referring to me] is present there. He will be discomforted if I were to go there. If I were to

agree with him, I will be going against my own views. And he would be embarrassed by my disagreement. I will therefore not go there."

He said on one occasion: "Why do you people constantly complain about him? He is also rendering services to the Dīn." Glory to Allāh! Allāh is the greatest! I address other groups by mentioning these excellent qualities of my elders and seniors to them. I then say to them:

أولئك آبائي فجئني بمثلهم – إذا جمعتنا يا جرير المجامع

O Jarīr! When you bring us together in large assemblies, then present to us people as great as my forefathers.

Hadrat Maulānā Fatah Muhammad Thānwī

He was a well-read scholar and a senior Sufi. He had first pledged allegiance to Hadrat Nawāb Qutb ad-Dīn Khān Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. When the latter passed away, he aligned himself to Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Thānwī Muhājir Makkī *quddisa sirruhu* and was conferred khilāfah by him.

He was Hadrat Wālā's first teacher. Hadrat Wālā studied the primary Persian and Arabic texts under him. He was a very religious, blessed and spiritually high personality who was extremely kind to his students. He undertook Hadrat Wālā's training and tutelage when Hadrat Wālā was very young and at the beginning stages of his student life – a time when his blessed heart was pure and clean from all marks and blemishes. The Maulānā therefore proved to be a key to blessings and good fortune, and he firmly embedded the love for Dīn in Hadrat Wālā's heart. It was as if these lessons were carved in stone. Hadrat Wālā relates with much joy and gratitude: "I acquired the fundamental capital of love for Dīn from the blessed company of Maulānā because he was an ardent lover of Dīn. Through the Maulānā's blessings, my desire for Dīn increased to such a level that I began performing tahajjud salāh when I still had not reached the age of maturity."

Maulānā had a very unassuming disposition, was very simple, and was physically very thin and short. Anyone looking at his external appearance could never guess he was of such a high rank. Hadrat Wālā took one of his honourable guests to meet

the Maulānā. The latter accorded a lot of respect to Hadrat Wālā. As Hadrat Wālā was returning with his guest just before sunset, the guest asked: "You were supposed to take me to meet your teacher. Why don't we go there now?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "That was my teacher whom we visited just now." The guest said in astonishment: "Was that really your teacher!? He did not even look like he was your student."

The Maulānā was very particular about piety. He came to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion and said: "When two people live together, it results in interactions between them. These interactions necessitate the fulfilment of certain rights. Sometimes, there are shortfalls in the fulfilment of those rights. I may have certainly failed in this regard in my interaction with you. I request your pardon."

Hadrat Wālā immediately realized that the Maulānā was making a subtle reference to the rare occasions when he had hit Hadrat Wālā when he was studying under him, and was seeking pardon for those occasions. Hadrat Wālā said: "Hadrat! I have fully understood what you are seeking pardon for. Hadrat! That was essentially your kindness and mercy. There is no question of seeking pardon for that. Whatever little I have learnt is through the blessings of that beating." The Maulānā said: "No. You must certainly pardon me. Hadrat Wālā excused himself several times but the Maulānā paid no heed. Hadrat Wālā was eventually forced to say: "I have pardoned you." Look at the Maulānā's level of caution and consideration!

The Maulānā always went on foot when travelling to the nearby towns and villages. One day he was going on foot to Gangoh. In the meantime, Hadrat Wālā also left for Gangoh on an ox-cart. On the way, he saw the Maulānā, so he got off from the ox-cart immediately and said: "Hadrat! There is enough place on the ox-cart, you too should get on." But he refused.

Instead of persisting, Hadrat Wālā also began walking with him and said: "Very well, I will not insist." The Maulānā said: "This is worse than insisting." He added: "I am in the habit of walking, while you will be inconvenienced by it. You should rather get on." Hadrat Wālā said: "Hadrat! How can I allow you to walk while I sit on the ox-cart? My sitting on the conveyance is dependent on you." The Maulānā had to sit on the ox-cart while Hadrat Wālā was able to get him to sit without insisting

on him. He was able to provide comfort to the Maulānā in this subtle way.

The Maulānā, due to his extreme humility and kindness, used to go often to meet Hadrat Wālā. He was an avid reader but got very little chance of reading because his eyesight had gone weak. On one occasion he ordered some new book which covered several large volumes. He loaded them personally and brought them to Hadrat Wālā saying: “I cannot read them, so I brought them to you to read.”

Hadrat Wālā relates: “The Maulānā used to bear a lot of inconvenience to come and visit me while he was alive. Coincidentally, it was raining heavily on the day he passed away. I could not go personally to his funeral because I was scared of falling sick due to a severe plague which was going around at the time. So the Maulānā’s family brought his body to my place. This made me think of his constant practice of coming personally to visit me.”

This makes me remember another incident which demonstrates that the Maulānā continued showing his kindness to Hadrat Wālā even from the ‘Ālam-e-Barzakh (the period between death and resurrection). After Hadrat Wālā returned to Thānah Bhawan from Kānpūr, the Maulānā’s son-in-law, Janāb Hāfiz ‘Ismatullāh Sāhib, who had been Hadrat Wālā’s classmate during their childhood saw the Maulānā in his dream. He was saying with reference to Hadrat Wālā: “He has arrived from Kānpūr. Why don’t you invite him for a meal? You must invite him, slaughter the rooster which you have domesticated and feed it to him.” Subsequently, he slaughtered the rooster and invited Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Wālā relates: “Maulānā loved his students intensely and was very enthusiastic about teaching. It was his ardent desire to simplify for his students and teach them whatever he knew. This is why he used to continue teaching without bothering about the time. This obviously annoyed the students. When the Maulānā passed away in a plague, several of his students also died one after the other. They would see him in a dream, he would tell them: “Come and read your lesson to me”, and they would die within a few days. There were a few outside students [not of Thānah Bhawan] who had gone back to their respective towns. They also dreamt of Maulānā asking them to read their lesson to him, and they too passed away within a few

days of seeing the dream. In this way, it seemed as if the Maulānā singled out his students at the time of his death and assembled them in that world as well."

In short, the Maulānā was very attached to Hadrat Wālā and although he was Hadrat Wālā's teacher, he accorded a lot of respect to him. Hadrat Wālā too had a lot of faith in him. He relates incidents from the Maulānā's life to this day, and says: "Glory to Allāh! What an era that was! What great people they were!"

Hadrat Sayyid Muhammad 'Ābid Deobandī

Hadrat Hājī Sayyid Muhammad 'Ābid Deobandī was from among the khulafā' of Shaykh al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh.* He was well-known specifically for his 'amalīyyāt. He was also a principal of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband for a short period. He was very particular about adhering strictly to his time table. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "A person who knew him well could say at any time that Hājī Sāhib was engaged in a particular task at this moment. If a person went to verify it, he would certainly find him engaged in that task. It could not be otherwise."

Hadrat Wālā had many opportunities of meeting him during his student days because Hadrat Wālā used to perform most of his salāh in Chattah Musjid where Hājī Sāhib used to remain most of the time. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib used to perform salāh in the same musjid, and also lead the people in the salāh. Hājī Sāhib used to lead the people in salāh in Maulānā Ya'qūb's absence. Instead of performing the salāh himself, Hājī Sāhib would quite often ask Hadrat Wālā to lead the people in salāh. His noble thoughts about Hadrat Wālā can be gauged from this.

It was Hājī Sāhib's practice to make elaborate preparations for opening the fast in the month of Ramadān, and distributing the food to everyone. He maintained this practice during his stay in Makkah Mu'azzamah. Hadrat Wālā was in Makkah Mu'azzamah during the same period. No matter in which part of the Haram Sharīf Hadrat Wālā was at the time of opening fast, Hājī Sāhib would certainly send his food there. This demonstrates his special attachment with Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Wālā too was very respectful towards him and showed due consideration to him. Some of the elders of Deoband had some misunderstanding with Hājī Sāhib and Hadrat Wālā happened to go there at the time. Based on his previous relations with Hājī Sāhib, it could not happen that Hadrat Wālā does not go to meet him. On the other hand, it was also necessary for him to give consideration to his teachers. Hadrat Wālā experienced a severe conflict of emotions. He eventually went to Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib and said to him: "Hadrat! Based on my previous relations with Hadrat Hājī Sayyid Muhammad ʿĀbid Sāhib, whenever I come to Deoband I make it a point of going to meet him. But I am very confused on this occasion. If I do not go to meet him, it will seem most ill-mannered and disloyal. And if I do go, it may turn out to be against the welfare of the Madrasah." Hadrat Maulānā said: "No, no, you should certainly go to meet him. It is not against the welfare of the Madrasah. In fact, it may decrease his opposition to the Madrasah."

Hājī Sāhib was a senior Pīr Bhāi to Hadrat Wālā and when he experienced any spiritual objections, he went and conferred with Hājī Sāhib. On receiving a satisfactory reply from him, Hadrat Wālā became even more convinced that in addition to being an expert in the field of ʿamalīyyāt, he was also a spiritual master. Details in this regard will be provided in a later chapter – inshā Allāh.

Hadrat Hājī Muhammad Anwar Deobandī

Hadrat Hājī Muhammad Anwar Sāhib Deobandī was a khalīfah of Hadrat Hājī Sayyid Muhammad ʿĀbid Sāhib Deobandī and a senior Sufi. In fact, some people considered him to be superior to his shaykh. When he returned from hajj he experienced a condition which caused people to think that he had become mad. He would give his items for free to people, cook large amounts of food and distribute it to all and sundry, and would remain in a sort of intoxication most of the time.

Hadrat Wālā happened to go to Deoband during this time so he went to visit him. Hājī Sāhib said to Hadrat Wālā in privacy: "I have to tell you something which I have not told anyone else as yet. However, you must not tell anyone as long as I am alive. When I was in the Haram Sharīf, I saw a few Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* while I was in a state of wakefulness. The

present condition which you see in me is the effect of the gazes of those Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*."

The people asked Hadrat Wālā: "Did he tell you anything special when you were in privacy with him?" Hadrat Wālā spoke the truth and said: "Yes he did tell me something but he forbade me from mentioning it to anyone as long as he is living. So I cannot reveal it to you now."

As per Hājī Sāhib's instruction, Hadrat Wālā did not disclose it to anyone as long as he was alive. Once he passed away, he did not try to conceal it.

It becomes clear from this story that Hājī Sāhib considered Hadrat Wālā to be the only one worthy of this special spiritual secret. This is why he did not relate it to anyone else and also forbade him from relating it to anyone.

Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī

Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* was the most senior khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He loved Hadrat Wālā a lot. He made the following statement about Hadrat Wālā to one of his special associates: "I had love for him from the time he did not even know me." This statement will soon be re-quoted from *Khwān Khalīl*.

Whenever I used to go to Hadrat Wālā in Thānah Bhawan, I had to pass Sahāranpūr. I always had the opportunity of going to meet Hadrat Maulānā during these trips. On one such occasion, he said to me with genuine humility and affection: "I am also sitting along the way, and the righteous people who are moving to and fro from Maulānā [referring to Hadrat Wālā] come and visit me."

I now relate some incidents which demonstrate Hadrat Maulānā's special attention to and consideration of Hadrat Wālā. These are quoted from *Khwān Khalīl* which is written by Hadrat Wālā himself.

1. I had been enjoying the Maulānā's respects since a long time. But this increased considerably after I left Kānpūr and returned to Thānah Bhawan. I used to go up and down to Sahāranpūr quite often and made it a point of attending Mazāhir al-'Ulūm's annual graduation ceremony. In each of my

visits to Sahāranpūr, I used to sit for lengthy periods in Maulānā's company and benefit from him.

I was junior to him in every respect; in age, rank, knowledge and practice. In fact there was no comparison in the latter two. In fact, merely mentioning this concept of seniority and youthfulness appears to be a type of claim to knowledge and practice. The strange thing is that despite this, Maulānā's treatment of me was certainly as an equal. Sometimes his treatment was like a junior to a senior. What can be greater than this! His conduct was certainly out of humility. It is possible that it was also because of the fact that his affiliation to A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* was via Hadrat Gangohī while mine was direct. If this was also a reason for the manner in which he treated me, it proves his highest level of practical wisdom in the sense that he preserved the ranks of people and treated them accordingly.

2. The Maulānā said to one of his special associates: "I had love for Ashraf from the time he did not even know me."

3. Although I was of a lower rank than him, he used to honour me regularly by sending gifts to me.

4. I used to be extremely shy to deliver talks in his presence but I could not excuse myself because I had to carry out his instruction. But the Maulānā would listen very attentively and with full enthusiasm.

5. He said with regard to my lectures: "There is no room to point a finger at his lectures."

6. He used to honour me by visiting me occasionally. The first time he came, I recall making elaborate food preparations out of love for him. I also invited a few seniors of the town because this is also considered to be a type of conferring honour to a guest. The Maulānā said jokingly: "Why were so elaborate preparations made?" I replied: "Hadrat himself is the cause of it. If Hadrat visits us often, we will not go into such formalities. Your rare visits are the causes of these elaborate preparations." Subsequently, he began visiting more often and the formalities in preparations also decreased.

7. I differed with one of my friends on the issue of whether it was permissible to take a photograph of the rear of a person – where his face is not photographed. We continued

corresponding with each other on this issue. Eventually, I convinced my friend to appoint Maulānā to give his decision and then requested Maulānā to research the issue. Maulānā gladly accepted and provided an answer which we both accepted. This arbitration is published towards the end of the fourth volume of *Fatāwā Imdādīyyah*. The Maulānā's prelude to his decision is worth reading. He wrote:

> This unworthy servant is not qualified to pass a decision on an issue which the noble 'ulamā' differ in. However, I am doing it in compliance to a noble order which was issued to me. I now present whatever came to my mind on this issue…

8. There is a porch attached to the southern section of Pīr Muhammad Wālī Musjid. A shelter was constructed over this porch. The Maulānā wrote something in this regard and a reply to it was presented here. Several letters were exchanged but no final decision was made. This correspondence is titled *Musā'alah Ahl al-Khullāh fī az-Zullah* (Asking people of friendship about the shelter). This has been published towards the end of volume two of *Tarjīh ar-Rājih*. The beginning of the third letter contains a hearty statement. It reads as follows:

> Your letter was a cause of blessings. Several days passed thinking about whether I should say anything about this issue or not because repetition might be burdensome. I eventually decided to set aside my thoughts and say what needs to be said.

Observe how the Maulānā combined consideration to the truth and consideration to my feelings in this one sentence. The effect of this was that although I did not receive a reply to what he presented, I realized that not receiving a reply should not be considered to be a proof in itself…and the scholars should be consulted for additional research on this subject.

9. Some people spread some untrue stories about me. These became the talk of the town. I was in Meerut at the time and was totally unaware of it. A well-wisher conveyed it to me. I was quite saddened and more concerned about the ill-feeling it must have caused to Maulānā. I therefore wrote to him to verify the story. I received the following reply from the Maulānā:

> I do not know what joy the people get in spreading false stories and thereby causing pain to the hearts

of good people. The attachment and love which I had for you since before is still intact. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for that.

[The Maulānā quotes the following couplet]:

"It is not true that love for you has left Hāfiz's heart. In fact, the first promise which was made to you shall remain until the very end."

Inshā Allāh, the love which I have for you in my heart and which I consider to be a treasure for me in the Hereafter cannot change. The stories which I heard are over exaggerated.

I quoted the gist of the above story here. Full details are mentioned in *Hikāyāt ash-Shikāyāt* number four. When this entire episode was over, the Maulānā said to me: "It was I who had conveyed the information of these rumours without attributing it to myself via the well-wisher[1] so that you could respond swiftly and prevent it from going out of hand."

10. There was a circumcision ceremony in a particular town. Coincidentally, Maulānā [Khalīl Ahmad] from Sahāranpūr, Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib from Deoband and I from Thānah Bhawan all landed at the same place. But I did not attend the ceremony and returned home because of certain objections which I had to it. The other elders did not pay attention to those obstacles and participated in the ceremony. Later on, someone asked the Maulānā the reason for this difference in approach. Look at his humble reply: "We practised on the fatwā while he [referring to Hadrat Wālā] practised on taqwā." His reply clearly demonstrates his humility and also his full consideration to providing a wonderful explanation to the action of one who acted differently from him on a disputed issue.

11. The Maulānā had humility like that of the pious predecessors in the sense that he used to also consult his juniors on academic issues and complexities. If he was

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[1] The well-wisher refers to the person who informed Hadrat Wālā of the rumours when Hadrat Wālā was in Meerut. So what this means is that Hadrat Maulānā asked the person to convey the information to Hadrat Wālā so that he may respond to it and thereby put an end to all the stories and rumours. (Translator)

convinced by the explanations of his juniors, he would certainly accept them. We were travelling to Bahāwalpūr on one occasion when he said to me: "One of the etiquette of accepting gifts as gauged from the Hadīth is that the person must not have any expectation or anticipation. But whenever we are on a journey, those who invite us are in the habit of giving us gifts. We have become so used to receiving gifts on these journeys that our mind goes towards the gifts. Are these thoughts of the gifts included in this anticipation? If they are, it will be against the Sunnah to accept them."

Where did I have the qualification to reply to a question posed by such a great scholar and Sufi!? However, because his tone suggested that an answer had to be given, it became necessary for me to give an answer. I said: "I think that we have to make a distinction. First of all, there is a strong possibility of receiving a gift. We will now have to check that in the case where we did not receive a gift, did we feel offended or not? If we did feel offended, then the thoughts which we experienced previously will be considered to be an anticipation [which is against the Sunnah]. But if we did not feel offended, it will not be considered to be an anticipation. It is merely a thought for which there is no ruling." The Maulānā was most impressed by this reply and made du'ā' for me.

12. He said to me on one occasion: "A Hadīth states that 12 000 people will never be defeated as a result of being small in number. But no restriction is mentioned in the Hadīth. So is it a general ruling which includes every situation even if there are hundreds of thousands of unbelievers who are ready to fight you, or is there any proof which restricts the number? If it is a general ruling, then the objection which we can make is that there were many places in which the Muslims were more than this number [of 12 000] but were still defeated."

The obvious meaning of this Hadīth is that it is a general ruling and there is no reason to restrict it without a strong proof. If the Muslims were defeated at any place then that too is not a proof. Where they were defeated, it was because of some other reason and not because of small numbers. The reason could be obvious, e.g. disunity in the ranks, or it could be concealed, e.g. self-conceit, relying on one's means, etc. as had happened in the Battle of Hunayn when the Muslims were 12 000 in number and the unbelievers were 4 000 (as stated in *Jalālayn*).

The Muslims were overpowered in the beginning because of their pride over their large numbers (as stated in the Qur'ān: "On the day of Hunayn when you prided yourselves over your large numbers…").[1] Then towards the end, the very same overpowered Muslims became victorious (Allāh says: "Allāh then sent down His assurance to His Messenger and to the believers, and He sent down armies which you did not see…").[2] The descent of Allāh's assurance was dependent on the removal of the cause of defeat, viz. pride. And the pride was removed through repentance." The Maulānā was very happy and commended my answer.

Note: This clearly demonstrates the Maulānā's humility, absence of pride in seeking the truth, and striving to increase his knowledge. This was done out of submission to Allāh's order: "Say: O my Sustainer! Increase me in knowledge."

13. I was returning from Bahāwalpūr by train and was accompanied by Maulānā. Coincidentally, only Maulānā and I were in that coach. The rest of our companions were in other coaches. It was the time of zuhr, it was intensely hot and we were perspiring profusely. The Maulānā, in his absolute humility and informality, picked up a fan and began fanning me. How could I allow him to continue! I took hold of the fan. He said: "What is wrong? There is no one watching us." (he said this because there was no third person in the coach)

I said: "He is certainly watching." He asked: "Who is watching?" I said: "The Being for whose sake I show respect to you is certainly watching." He smiled and kept the fan aside.

Look at the level of his selflessness! Look at how he treated his junior! Far greater than this was that when he realized that I was feeling embarrassed, he did not persist. I am saying that this was greater because when he started fanning me, he did it to provide comfort to my body; and when he stopped, he did it to provide comfort to my heart. His second action is obviously superior.

14. I differed with the Maulānā on certain interpretational and customary issues which concerned mutual interactions and matters pertaining to organization and arrangement. In the

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 25.
[2] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 26.

presence of such differences, I felt that I could only have rational love for the Maulānā. I did not think I could be naturally drawn towards him. However, my feelings were such that let alone when he was present, even when I merely thought of him I experienced an attraction towards him which I could not understand. It was probably the effect of this that when I dreamt of him, it resulted in the same feeling. This is a clear proof of his being beloved, i.e. the lover does not even think he loves another – in fact, he thinks he does not love him – but his feelings pull him. I consider this to be Allāh's grace and mercy on me for having safeguarded me against the harms of these differences.

Note: I [the author of this book] also experience the same pull towards Hadrat Maulānā in my wakefulness and in my dreams. All praise is due to Allāh.

Hadrat Shāh 'Abd ar-Rahīm Rāipūrī

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh* was from among the most senior khulafā' of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He was a gracious and blessed Sufi. Hadrat Wālā says with regard to Shāh Sāhib: "My faith in him was natural and without having searched for proofs. My heart automatically testified that Shāh Sāhib is a pious and righteous man." Simplicity, religiosity and humility are distinctly seen in most of Shāh Sāhib's associates and attendants. This is a clear proof of his blessedness. Hadrat Wālā also says: "Although Shāh Sāhib was extremely humble, he never feared anyone when proclaiming the truth. He would lower his gaze and frankly state whatever had to be said."

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib used to treat Hadrat Wālā with real love and affection. He would attend Hadrat Wālā's lectures enthusiastically. Hadrat Wālā went to Rāipūr to visit him on one occasion. Shāh Sāhib had just recovered from an illness but was still feeling a bit weak. He was in his place of solitude which was on the roof of his room. Hadrat Wālā was in the courtyard below. Shāh Sāhib was so concerned about Hadrat Wālā's comfort that he would come downstairs again and again to check if Hadrat Wālā needed anything. He kept a watchful gaze all the time to ensure Hadrat Wālā was not discomforted in any way. He was so concerned that, as related by Hadrat Wālā: "Whenever my eyes opened during the night, I would see Shāh Sāhib present nearby. This is how he spent most of the

night. He also went out of his way to feed me. He interceded on behalf of one of his attendants by saying: 'This is my devoted friend. He is very good in cooking rice. He has taken a lot of care in cooking some rice for you. I request you to accept it.' In short, he paid a lot of attention to me, and treated me with great honour."

We learnt from some reliable people that when Hadrat Shāh Sāhib fell ill and large crowds of people began visiting him without any consideration to time, he said: "The principles laid down by Maulānā Thānwī provide a lot of comfort."

Hadrat Maulānā Siddīq Ahmad Ambhetwī

He was also one of the senior khulafā' of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu*. He too showed a lot of love and affection for Hadrat Wālā. He used to attend Hadrat Wālā's lectures despite being a senior practising scholar himself. I have not heard any specific incident which indicates his kindness towards Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā mentions his kindness in general terms and also that he was with him on his hajj journey. Both his sons who are scholars themselves are presently associated to Hadrat Wālā and benefiting from him.

Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad Hasan Amrohī

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Ahmad Hasan Sāhib Amrohī *rahimahullāh* was a most beloved and upright student of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. He was most probably a khalīfah of Shaykh al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*. He was from among the eminent 'ulamā' of India. His eloquent speeches and writings, and his expertise in debating were well-known. He and Hadrat Wālā had many occasions of delivering lectures in numerous places. Each one had many opportunities of listening to the other one's lectures. They accorded much respect and consideration to each other although Hadrat Wālā was much younger than him.

Hadrat Wālā was a guest of the Maulānā in Amroha and forgot to ask him directions to the toilet. Hadrat Wālā needed to relieve himself in the latter part of the night and was very stressed because he did not know who he could ask. He was still worried in these thoughts when the Maulānā suddenly came out of his house and asked: "Do you need to go to the

toilet?” When Hadrat Wālā replied in the affirmative, the Maulānā curtained off the women’s section, personally brought clods of soil, water and a water can, and placed all in the toilet. Hadrat Wālā was quite embarrassed and said in a state of hesitation: “The clods of soil are an additional blessing. What was the need to bring them?” The Maulānā replied in all humility: “What is there if I placed them for you?”

Whenever Hadrat Wālā relates this story, he says: “From our group, the Maulānā was one person who used to wear very expensive clothing which bordered on extreme formality. I too assumed the same thing, but when he treated me in the manner in which he did on that night, I was more than convinced of his humility, informality and simplicity. I realized that his refined and elegant temperament was the reason behind his expensive dressing, and not extravagance and formality.”

Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad Hasan Kānpūrī And Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Allāhābādī

Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad Hasan Sāhib Kānpūrī and Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī were Hadrat Wālā’s Pīr Bhāis and khulafā’ of Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*. They loved Hadrat Wālā dearly although they had certain differences on the practice of samāʿ and other practices. Maulānā Kānpūrī was especially attached to Hadrat Wālā. On one occasion, he took Hadrat Wālā’s left over food and ate it in the presence of Hadrat Wālā and all others who were present in that function. He did this as a source of blessing. The Maulānā did this despite being a well-known and distinguished figure in Kānpūr who was looked up with reverence, while Hadrat Wālā was quite young and still in the early stages of his life. Another reason why the Maulānā liked Hadrat Wālā was because he ardently loved Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* and personally heard from the latter the special manner in which he spoke about Hadrat Wālā.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī also showed due consideration to Hadrat Wālā. A person invited the Maulānā together with Hadrat Wālā to a meal. The Maulānā practised samāʿ, and in most cases would accept an invitation on condition it was followed by a session of samāʿ

which, in his words, was a spiritual food. This is why Hadrat Wālā excused himself from accepting the invitation. But the inviter promised there will be no samāʿ session in Hadrat Wālā's presence. Hadrat Wālā too gave consideration to them by departing soon after the meal. But when he got up to leave, the Maulānā also got up and walked him to his conveyance.

Hadrat Wālā assumed that he came to bid him farewell, he will return to the house and join in the samāʿ session. But he did not do this. Hadrat Wālā sat in his conveyance while the Maulānā proceeded to his own conveyance and departed. The Maulānā considered it discourteous to attend a session in which Hadrat Wālā was not present. Had he attended, it would have meant he was waiting for Hadrat Wālā's departure so that he could initiate the samāʿ session. The Maulānā was most considerate of Hadrat Wālā's feelings and therefore changed his habit completely.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the sincerity and absence of fanaticism in these elders! Look at how they respected each other's views despite differences in their affinities, and see how they safeguarded themselves from hurting the feelings of the other. Unlike today when such practices are intentionally carried out solely to irk others.

The Maulānā said to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion: "You don't ever come to Radaulī Sharīf?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "You don't ever take us there!" He said: "Here, I am telling you to come with us." Hadrat Wālā said: "Hadrat! I will need you to focus on me so that you could create the capability of samāʿ in me first and make me like you so that I could be worthy of joining in." Hadrat Wālā actually used this subtle and humble approach to convey to him that there are certain prerequisites for the permissibility of samāʿ. The Maulānā fulfils those prerequisites so he listens to it, while Hadrat Wālā does not fulfil them and therefore does not listen.

When Hadrat Wālā went to visit the grave of Hadrat Khwājah Muʿīn ad-Dīn Chishtī Ajmerī *quddisa sirruhu*, he made it a point to ask the attendants to show him the Maulānā's grave so that he could pray there. This demonstrates the bond which Hadrat Wālā had with his Pīr Bhāis.

I recall another story which demonstrates this bond. Janāb Murtadā Khān Sāhib passed away. He was the manager of

Asghar ʿAlī Muhammad ʿAlī Perfume Factory in Lucknow and a Pīr Bhāi of Hadrat Wālā. He loved Hadrat Wālā as if he was his shaykh. Hadrat Wālā received the news of his demise after the zuhr salāh via a letter which was sent to him by the deceased's son. Hadrat Wālā expressed much sorrow and grief. After the ʿasr salāh he addressed all who were present, saying: "The deceased was my Pīr Bhāi and he has many rights over me." He then requested them all to pray for his forgiveness.

At this point I consider it most appropriate to quote a foreword which Hadrat Wālā wrote to a book titled *Matlaʿ al-Anwār* which is written by ʿAllāmah Muftī Rukn ad-Dīn Sāhib. This foreword demonstrates that while Hadrat Wālā had noble thoughts about people who held divergent views from his, he remained – by Allāh's grace – firm on his own creed. The foreword reads as follows:

> From this insignificant and unworthy servant, Ashraf ʿAlī – may Allāh pardon him – to the one with many merits, may Allāh *taʿālā* perpetuate his kindness.
>
> As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh
>
> I do not have a lot of time on my hands, so I illuminated myself with parts of *Matlaʿ al-Anwār* in accordance with the following couplet:
>
> "A single strand from your locks of hair is sufficient for me. Leave aside desire, your mere fragrance is enough."
>
> Hadrat Maulānā was my Pīr Bhāi and I considered him to be my elder brother. Bearing in mind that he was my elder, it is essential for me to be respectful towards him. Since I also considered him to be my brother, I am permitted to be a bit informal towards him.
>
> Because of these two positions [of being an elder and a brother], I am presenting the following view which combines respect and informality. The book is worthy of emulation. However, caution demands that the disputed actions and rulings be excluded from emulation for some people, while the actions be excluded for all. This is closest to caution. I feel that

if Hadrat were to read this foreword of mine, while he would neither consider me to be right nor wrong, he would certainly consider me to be excused. I pray for Hadrat and all his people from the bottom of my heart. O Allāh! You become theirs and make them Yours. I also request the same prayer for myself.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Raushan Khān

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Raushan Khān Sāhib Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was a khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and a Sufi with burning passion for Allāh *taʿālā*. I was present with Hadrat Wālā when he went to visit the Maulānā on his death bed. After speaking about his illness, he said: “Anyway these are things which accompany illness. You must pray to Allāh *taʿālā* that I depart from this world with īmān. Allāh *taʿālā* appointed you as the Mujaddid of this century. May Allāh illuminate the world through your blessings and may He completely uproot baseless customs and innovations through you.”

I remember the above words almost exactly as he said them. He said them with real emotion, tearful eyes and a changed voice. In the meanwhile, Hadrat Wālā was listening to him deferentially with his head lowered. Hadrat Wālā then raised his hands and prayed for pardon and wellness. I think he made the following duʿā’:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْئَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدِّيْنِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

O Allāh! We beg You for pardon and wellness in our religious life, worldly life and in the Hereafter.

Hadrat Wālā added: “We ought to seek wellness from Allāh *taʿālā* in every situation and condition.”

A reliable disciple of the Maulānā used to relate to me: “The Maulānā was fully convinced that Hadrat Wālā was a Mujaddid. In fact, he had particularly instructed me saying: ‘You must certainly go to meet Maulānā Thānwī. He is the Mujaddid of this century.’”

Hadrat Maulānā Yahyā

Janāb Maulānā Muhammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh* was the special attendant of Hadrat Maulānā

Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He said to me: "I had always thought that Hadrat Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* was the Mujaddid of this century. But I have come to the conclusion that our Maulānā's [Hadrat Gangohī's] blessings were specific, and it was the 'ulamā' who benefited more from him. I now see the Muslims benefiting more from Maulānā Thānwī. This is why the qualities of a Mujaddid are found to a greater extent in him. In fact, I think that Hadrat's rank is above that of a Mujaddid."

All praise is due to Allāh, the reader was presented with a few examples of the special attention and focus which the elders of our own spiritual family and of other spiritual families directed at Hadrat Wālā. The reader must have gauged very well that Allāh *ta'ālā* had directed the hearts of senior Sufis towards Hadrat Wālā from the very beginning. Those of insight had fathomed and witnessed Hadrat Wālā's essential jewel and natural capabilities through the light of their insight. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Hadrat Wālā always interacted with his elders with genuine respect and reverence. We hear Hadrat Wālā saying this quite often: "All praise is due to Allāh! I can say that I neither have knowledge nor practice. However, Allāh *ta'ālā* conferred me with a bounty through which I can hope for salvation; it is respect."

When making mention of his elders, Hadrat Wālā expresses immense sorrow over the present day attitude of people. He says:

> The temperaments of people have changed completely. There is so much of disregard for facts that I can honestly say that I do not even feel like speaking with anyone and I cannot appraise anyone even as a superficial Sufi. I see all of them dyed in the same colour. I thought all Sufis must be like those whom I encountered in the past. Therefore, their qualities and traits did not seem to be so extraordinary at the time. But now when I recall them, it seems to me that whatever they did was like a supernatural feat in comparison to today's times.

Hadrat Wālā would often think about those excellent and blessed days and quote the following couplet:

إذا الناس ناس، والزمان زمان

When people were genuine people, and the era was a real era.

He would also quote this couplet:

> My friends drank the wine and departed. They left the tavern empty and departed.

Hadrat Wālā used to quote the following Arabic couplet with real passion and joy:

أولئك آبائي فجئني بمثلهم – إذا جمعتنا يا جرير المجامع

O Jarīr! When you bring us together in large assemblies, then present to us people as great as my forefathers.

I now conclude this chapter and ask Allāh *taʿālā* to bestow me with the love of those personalities and the inspiration to emulate them. The most perfect and easiest way of doing this in today's times is to follow and emulate Hadrat Wālā because, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, all their blessed qualities are collectively found in Hadrat Wālā.

A Few Special Contemporaries

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the fundamental theme of this chapter has been concluded. I now list some of Hadrat Wālā's special contemporaries. They enjoyed a special relationship with Hadrat Wālā and who – despite being his contemporaries, class mates or his peers – did not treat him as an equal but as someone in whom they had a lot of confidence and whom they look up to with respect.

On one hand, the favours and kindness of these personalities are of slightly a lower level than those of the previously-mentioned elders because they are not as popularly known as the former group. On the other hand, their kindness to and faith in Hadrat Wālā are worthy of more attention because when it comes to the elders and seniors, their favours could have been based purely on affection and kindness, while this possibility does not exist with contemporaries. This is because there is generally competition among contemporaries and a carefree demeanour with equals. This distinction between the two was the reason for writing the present addendum. However, I did not see the need to relate incidents which display the respect and reverence which these contemporaries accorded to Hadrat Wālā because there are many people at

present who witnessed the manner in which they interact with Hadrat Wālā.

The names of these contemporaries are now listed after the above necessary petition.

1. Janāb Hāfiz Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, former principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, son of Hujjatul Islām Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*.

2. Janāb Hakīm Masʿūd Ahmad Sāhib, son of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.

3. Janāb Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh*, former deputy principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband.

4. Janāb Maulānā Sayyid Asghar Husayn Sāhib Deobandī, lecturer at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband.

5. Janāb Maulānā Muhammad Yāsīn Sāhib Deobandī, former lecturer at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband.

6. Janāb Maulānā Hajī Shafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib Muhājir Makkī, special attendant of Hadrat Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Hājī Shāh Imdādullāh Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*.

From among all these contemporaries, Janāb Hāfiz Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Janāb Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were the most well known. Their interaction with Hadrat Wālā was the most respectful, reverential and courteous although they were his classmates. However, Hadrat Wālā surpassed them in his ability to provide proofs and evidences.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Eternal Good Fortune

Gauging from the incidents and stories which were related previously, it becomes absolutely clear that Allāh *taʿālā* had created Hadrat Wālā specifically for the important responsibility of revival of Islam and rectification of the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Indications of this were glaringly visible even before he was born.

We related in detail how Hadrat Wālā was still in the world of souls when Allāh *taʿālā* turned the attention of a pious personality and Sufi, Hadrat Hāfiz Ghulām Murtadā Sāhib Pānīpattī, to pray for Hadrat Wālā's arrival into this world of existence. Allāh *taʿālā* also inspired this Sufi to give a name for Hadrat Wālā long before he was conceived. A clear proof that foretelling Hadrat Wālā's birth and naming him was an inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* is that this foretelling was done at a time when Hadrat Wālā's parents had given up all hope of getting any children. When Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib named Hadrat Wālā while the latter was still in his mother's womb, another woman whose daughter-in-law was expecting a child requested him to give a name for her grandchild as well. But Hāfiz Sāhib replied with an angry frown: "What do you think, I am an agriculturist who goes around naming children?" This clearly demonstrates that foretelling Hadrat Wālā's birth and naming him was done through divine inspiration and was his peculiarity.

In short, Hadrat Wālā enjoyed the most special attention of the elders right from the beginning. Details in this regard were provided in a previous chapter titled: Meeting Pious Elders. Allāh *taʿālā* had provided the choicest resources for Hadrat Wālā's external and internal training from the very beginning. First of all, he came onto the field of existence through the prayers of a pious personality and received his spiritual attention and focus from the time of his conception. The effects of this took the form of attraction towards Allāh *taʿālā* and severing himself from the creation. These effects are found in him to this day and are actually increasing by the day. This

was followed by the affectionate care of his righteous mother and the training of his most wise, intelligent and kind father. Then he studied the external sciences by the Ghazzālīs and Rāzīs of his time, some of whom were spiritual masters of the highest level and the most perfect Sufi shaykhs. Each one of them was an expert in his respective field. All these bounties and favours were sufficiently explained previously.

The Greatest Bounty

We will now provide details on that greatest bounty which is the grand total of everything. All previously mentioned bounties return to this one and were preludes to this one particular bounty. It is the bounty of the honour of bayʿah – pledging allegiance.

Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam Imām aṯ-Ṯarīq Shaykh al-ʿUlamā' wa al-Mashā'ikh Ḫaḏrat Ḫājī Shāh Imdādullāh Ṣāḫib Thānwī Chishtī Ṣābrī Muhājir Makkī *quddisa sirruhu* is well known throughout the world and therefore needs no introduction. According to Ḫaḏrat Maulānā Shāh Muẕaffar Ḫusayn Ṣāḫib Kāndhlawī *quddisa sirruhu*, Ḫaḏrat Ḫājī Ṣāḫib's lofty rank was exactly like that of the elders of the past, although he was born in this era. (This was quoted by Qārī Muḫammad ʿAlī Khān Jalālābādī).

Countless erudite ʿulamā' – even distinguished spiritual masters of other spiritual families – considered it to be a source of pride to be able to pledge allegiance to Ḫaḏrat Ḫājī Ṣāḫib. I can therefore state without any hesitation that there was no personality like him in this era who combined the Sharīʿah and the Ṯarīqah, and who was an asylum for so many ʿulamā' and spiritual masters. Famous Arab ʿulamā', and especially the renowned and prominent ʿulamā' of India – almost all of them – were aligned to Ḫaḏrat Ḫājī Ṣāḫib and crumb-eaters at his table. Ḫaḏrat Wālā too is from among those select few. In fact, in certain respects, he enjoys the position of being from among his choicest disciples.

Divine Inspiration

Like the other phases of Ḫaḏrat Wālā's religious life, the pledge of allegiance and the perfection of spiritual abundance were also realized in a strange and extraordinary manner through Allāh *taʿālā*. Divine help came to him in such a manner that

Allāh *taʿālā* directed a distinguished spiritual master and exceptional spiritual mentor like Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* towards Hadrat Wālā.

Details in this regard are as follows: Hadrat Wālā was still a young man studying at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband when Hadrat Hājī Sāhib sent a message from Makkah Muʿazzamah to Hadrat Wālā's father saying: "You must come for hajj. And when you come, you must bring your eldest son with." He sent this message although he had emigrated from India long before Hadrat Wālā was born, and apparently did not even know him. However, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was in the habit of enquiring about his beloved hometown [Thānah Bhawan] and its people from those who used to come to Makkah for hajj. We are therefore inclined to think that he must have heard something about Hadrat Wālā via this medium. But what could there have been in Hadrat Wālā during that tender age and time of studies that could have been conveyed to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in such a distant land which caused him to develop such a strong bond with him that he summoned him to Makkah Muʿazzamah without even knowing him? We can therefore say that his instruction must have certainly stemmed from some divine indication, spiritual attraction or mutual affinity.

This can be affirmed from what we are witnessing at present: The peculiar clarity, detail and universality with which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's teachings and traditions are spreading, and the manner in which the Imdādīyyah way is being illuminated and displayed by Allāh's help through Hadrat Wālā is not being accomplished through anyone else. This is absolutely clear, there is no room to deny it. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib himself said to Hadrat Wālā on several occasions: "You are totally on my path." Furthermore, whenever Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had the opportunity of reading any of Hadrat Wālā's writings or hearing any of his talks, he would say: "May Allāh reward you. You have fully expounded what was in my heart." If anyone were to pose a question to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib while he was delivering a discourse or conducting an assembly, he would point towards Hadrat Wālā and say: "You must ask him, he has understood very well."

It was Hadrat Wālā's absolutely natural affinity, divinely decreed capability, and all-embracing lovability – which is expressed in Sufi terms as murādīyyat – which were the

fundamental reasons for Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's divinely inspired attraction towards Hadrat Wālā.

In short, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib himself thought of Hadrat Wālā in Makkah Muʿazzamah without having known him. This was explained above. A poet rightly says:

> When the thirsty ones search for water in the world,
> water also searches for them.

Commencement Of The Journey

In order for the sciences and teachings of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to be propagated, Hadrat Wālā was destined, from the very first day, to pledge allegiance to him. The divine means which were provided for this to be realized commenced when Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* went to Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband for some work. The moment Hadrat Wālā saw him, he ran to shake hands with him. There were some bricks which were lying around and, in his haste, he stumbled and was about to fall when Hadrat Maulānā caught hold of his hand and saved him. When Hadrat Wālā looked at him, he was overtaken by him and developed immense confidence in him to the extent that, in the words of Hadrat Wālā: "Without even understanding the reality and purpose of pledging allegiance, I requested him to accept my pledge." Hadrat Maulānā refused on the basis that spiritual occupation during student days would damage the acquisition of knowledge. A detailed account of this incident has been written by Hadrat Wālā in his biography on Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* titled, *Yād Yārān*. The reader may refer to it if he wishes.

A Letter To Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

Not long after this incident, Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was departing for his third hajj in 1299 A.H. Hadrat Wālā wrote a letter to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and most probably gave it to Hadrat Maulānā to hand it to him. Hadrat Wālā said in his letter: "I requested Maulānā to accept my pledge but he refused. I request you to ask Maulānā to accept my pledge."

Pledge In Absentia

We do not know what conversation transpired between Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī. What we do know is

that instead of interceding on behalf of Hadrat Wālā and asking Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī to accept Hadrat Wālā's pledge, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib himself inducted Hadrat Wālā in absentia to himself. We learn from this that hidden behind Hadrat Maulānā's refusal to accept his pledge was Allāh's decree that Hadrat Wālā had to fall in the lot of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and be chosen to explain, expound, elucidate and simplify his teachings and to spread them in the East and West.

If this had been predestined, how could Hadrat Wālā have connected himself to anyone else!? This can be further affirmed from the fact that around the same time, another classmate of Hadrat Wālā had requested Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī to accept his pledge and he did not refuse. He accepted the classmate's pledge, causing even more disappointment to Hadrat Wālā.

Although Hadrat Wālā's pledge was directly with Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, his faith and confidence in Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was still intact – as firm as it had been the first time he set eyes on him and when he had requested him to accept his pledge. Hadrat Wālā always viewed Hadrat Gangohī as his mentor. Whenever he faced any academic or spiritual difficulties, he consulted him without any hesitation as though he was a disciple of Hadrat Gangohī. Incidents in this regard will be related later on. On the other side, Hadrat Gangohī too always showed affection to him as he did to his own disciples, and also accorded him the respect of a Pīr Bhāi. Further affirmation that Hadrat Wālā was divinely decreed to fall in the lot of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib can be obtained from the fact that before he really got to know Hadrat Wālā, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib summoned him to Makkah Muʿazzamah via his father. This was related previously.

Departure For Hajj

The opportunity to respond to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's request was provided from the unseen as follows: Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband established a trading company in which people could purchase a share to the value of no more than 500 rupees. By the blessings of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā's father was a wealthy man. He wanted to purchase more shares, so he purchased one in his name, one in Hadrat Wālā's name and one in his younger son's name. In this way, he contributed a total of 1 500 rupees in the company but on different names. After some time, he took this amount back for some reason or the

other. Hadrat Wālā learnt of this. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he was – from the very beginning - especially particular about adhering to the injunctions of the Sharīʿah. He therefore asked his father: "You had contributed this amount of 500 rupees in my name and you have taken them back. Do they belong to me or to you?" His father wrote back: "This amount was mine and your name was merely used. But I now specify it in your ownership." Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "In such a case, I will have to pay zakāh on this amount and hajj has also become compulsory on me." His father sent him a cash amount to pay as zakāh, and said with regard to hajj: "Once I get your younger sister (who later became the mother of Maulānā Saʿīd Ahmad Sāhib and Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib) married, I will go for hajj next year. You must accompany me then. His father said this because his extreme love and affection for him could not permit him to allow his son to go on his own.

Although Hadrat Wālā respected his father totally and was also scared of him, he could be stubborn on occasions which needed stubbornness. When his father asked him to wait until the following year, he wrote back saying: "You must first write and give me a guarantee that you will be alive for the next four years." His father replied: "How can I give such a guarantee?" Hadrat Wālā said: "Hajj is already compulsory on me and there is no guarantee of life. Moreover, it is not permissible to delay hajj without a Sharʿī reason. His father very quickly got his daughter married in Shawwāl, and without completing all the normal customs of the wedding, he departed with Hadrat Wālā for hajj.

Stormy Seas

It was a time when the seas are normally very stormy. When they reached Ghāzī Abād station, his father met an acquaintance. When the latter learnt that they were going for hajj, he said: "Do you know what you are doing!? The seas are extremely stormy and we are constantly receiving news of violent storms." The father replied: "Brother, we are already on our way. Allāh is our master, you must pray for us." This was the response of the father. On the other side, Hadrat Wālā quoted the following couplet with full fervour:

> When we have such a strong builder like you, why should we fear the falling of the wall of the community? How can a person ever fear the waves of

> the sea when he has a ship-captain like Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām*?

In short, Hadrat Wālā accompanied his father with full enthusiasm and eagerness to fulfil the obligation of hajj. The seas were certainly very stormy. The ship whose name was Haydarī was quite small and could not handle the crushing of the waves. It would dip so much that its railings would almost touch the surface of the water and be on the verge of sinking. The high waves would wash over the entire shelter of the ship and drench the passengers. The sailors did their utmost to steer the ship safely, kept a vigilant eye and remained occupied in finding a safe passage. In the meantime, the pilgrims were occupied in prayer, crying and begging before Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Wālā relates: "Bearing in mind that I was travelling in Allāh's cause, I never experienced any fear or worry in my heart, although we did fear drowning. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for this." He adds: "While the pilgrims were occupied in prayer and begging to Allāh *taʿālā*, the wretched irreligious sailors were laughing at us and uttering blasphemies. Allāh forbid, Allāh forbid, they were saying: 'What can Allāh do when this is the way of this ship?'" Hadrat Wālā goes further: "It is also sad to say that even during this difficult situation, some Muslims were calling on others apart from Allāh. For example, they were calling on their spiritual mentors, they were taking the name of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and so on."

Arrival In Makkah And Meeting Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā and his father eventually reached Makkah Muʿazzamah safely. He was so overcome by respect and reverence for the Holy Sanctuary, that in the beginning he would not even spit anywhere. His first glance at the Kaʿbah caused a unique yearning pull. Hadrat Wālā says: "I never experienced such a feeling in my entire life."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was delighted by Hadrat Wālā's arrival. When Hadrat Wālā completed his hajj and visit to Madīnah, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said to him: "You must remain with me for six months." Hadrat Wālā sought his father's permission, but his fatherly affection could not bear such a separation. Hadrat Wālā very sorrowfully said to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: "My father is not giving me permission." Look at how strict he was in following the Sharīʿah. He said: "Obedience to your father takes

precedence. You may go back now, we will see what happens in the future."

Direct Pledge Of Allegiance

As we had related previously, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had honoured Hadrat Wālā with a pledge of allegiance in absentia in a letter which he had written to him before coming for hajj. Now he honoured him further with a direct hand-to-hand pledge of allegiance. Hadrat Wālā's father was also honoured with a pledge of allegiance. He was a very sincere and easygoing elder of olden times. When several other people were pledging allegiance to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, the latter – based on a previous request made by Hadrat Wālā's father - said to him: "Miyā 'Abd al-Haqq! You had also said you wanted to become a disciple. Come, you can also pledge allegiance now." He replied in his unique simple and easygoing manner: "No, no, Hadrat! I am not becoming a disciple now. I will become one later." It was a strange reaction. The shaykh is saying: "Become a disciple", but he was refusing. But his refusal too was based on absolute respect, sincerity and love. This will be gauged further on.

He immediately ordered a large platter of sweetmeats, obtained a beautiful turban, took twenty five rupees with him and presented himself before Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. He presented all these items with utmost respect and requested for his pledge to be accepted. This shows that he had been waiting until he obtained these items and deferred the pledge until then. The people in those days were generally very sincere, they had no airs whatsoever about them, and this entire episode also displayed these qualities. This is why Hadrat Hājī Sāhib accepted his gifts gladly, honoured him by accepting his pledge of allegiance and distributed the sweetmeats among those who were present. This episode was related here because: (1) we had intended mentioning that Hadrat Wālā's father had also pledged allegiance to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, (2) it contains a few lessons, and (3) it occurred during the same hajj journey in which Hadrat Wālā pledged allegiance directly to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib.

Traversing Religious Phases

This was Hadrat Wālā's first hajj which he performed the year he qualified from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and had went to

Kānpūr as a teacher. Hadrat Wālā had gone to Kānpūr towards the end of Safar 1301 A.H. and the blessed journey for hajj had taken place thereafter in Shawwāl. We gauge from this that Allāh *taʿālā* enabled him to easily traverse the different religious phases one after the other. These phases could be listed as follows:

1. Hadrat Wālā was still a student in 1299 A.H. and just nineteen years old when he received the letter of bayʿah in absentia.

2. The following year – 1300 A.H. – he qualified as an ʿalim at the age of about twenty.

3. Immediately thereafter, the means for spreading Islamic sciences were provided to him in 1301 A.H. Incidentally, this was the beginning of the fourteenth century [of the Emigration] when – as per the explanation of a famous Hadīth - Allāh *taʿālā* appointed Hadrat Wālā as a Mujaddid. He proceeded to Kānpūr and occupied himself in imparting general and special sciences to Allāh's creation through public lectures and private lessons to students.

4. Allāh *taʿālā* then enabled him to visit Makkah and Madīnah that same year, to meet his spiritual mentor and to pledge bayʿah directly at his hands.

5. He returned in 1302 A.H. and continued his occupations of teaching, lecturing and passing on the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā*. This remained his main occupation until 1307 A.H.

Correspondence With His Shaykh

Although Hadrat Wālā continued with dhikr and other spiritual exercises, and also corresponded with Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, he was more directed towards academic occupations. This is why the correspondence between him and his shaykh during this period contains subjects of a general nature. This is gauged from *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah* – a collection of letters which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib either wrote to Hadrat Wālā or replied to his letters.

In his first letter dated 22 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1303 A.H., Hadrat Wālā informs him of the passing away of a distant relative.

In his second letter dated 19 Rajab 1304 A.H., Hadrat Wālā requests Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to accept the position of patron of his madrasah.

In the third letter dated 12 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1306 A.H., Hadrat Hājī Sāhib expresses his joy over the fact that Hadrat Wālā gave up his occupation of printing, and returned to teaching and lecturing.

Dhikr And Spiritual Exercises

We learn from the above that the first three letters contained general subjects. As for dhikr and spiritual exercises, these commence from the fourth letter dated 22 Muharram 1308 A.H. It becomes clear from this that special attention to dhikr must have started towards the end of 1307 A.H. although it had been continuing previously. Hadrat Wālā himself says in this regard: "Although I could not achieve anything, I had an enthusiasm for dhikr from the time I pledged bayʿah and was never found wanting in this regard."

Attachment To The Spiritual Path

I say: How could Hadrat Wālā be devoid of dhikr when he was so particular about tahajjud salāh long before he reached the age maturity!? This was mentioned in the chapter on his childhood. Furthermore, long before he could pledge bayʿah – when he was still a student – he used to attend the circles of meditation of Hadrat Maulānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib, the former principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. Hadrat Wālā relates with regard to the effects of attending these circles: "No traces of selfishness remained in me and I felt as though I was an angel."

This obviously demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's natural spiritual capabilities. Moreover, during his student days when he had not pledged bayʿah as yet, he was overcome by intense fear. He went tremblingly to his affectionate teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib, and said: "Hadrat, show me something with which I could acquire peace and tranquillity." The Maulānā responded spontaneously: "Repent because this is like a request for unbelief because īmān is suspended between fear and hope. As for peace and tranquillity, that can be enjoyed by a believer only in the Hereafter." Hadrat Wālā relates: "When Hadrat Maulānā said this to me, my eyes

opened to reality and it was also a sort of consolation because the reality was made clear to me."

Another incident which took place during his student days is related: Hadrat Wālā read a story in a book. The story reads thus: A shaykh asked his disciple: "Do you know Allāh?" He replied: "How can I know Allāh? I only know you." Hadrat Wālā was infuriated and angered by this answer. He proceeded to his Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib, quoted the answer to him and said: "Hadrat, just look at this. There is so much of fanaticism and Sufi-worship that even in the presence of the shaykh, a person feels that he does not need Allāh!" The Maulānā explained the statement in a very subtle manner by asking him: "Do you know Allāh?" Hadrat Wālā's mind immediately moved to the point that who can really fathom Allāh *taʿālā* and know Him as He ought to be known? So this is what he said to his teacher. The Maulānā said: "Why, then, do you not consider the disciple's answer in the same vein? Why do you have to issue a fatwā of unbelief against him?"

During his student days, Hadrat Wālā wanted to study the *Mathnawī Sharīf* under Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib but the principal, Hadrat Maulānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib did not permit it, and said: "Do you want the Maulānā to remain here in the Madrasah or not?" He said this because the Maulānā himself was a spiritual master. If he were to teach the *Mathnawī Sharīf* he would be so affected by it, he would leave all his Madrasah duties and remain engrossed in spiritual activities.

All the above incidents demonstrate that Hadrat Wālā was attached to Sufism and books on this subject since his student days; and that he also experienced some lofty states such as fear and uprightness. In addition to this, he was infuriated by pseudo-Sufis and extremists. I recall another incident in this regard. For some time during his student days he lived in a room which was attached to a musjid. It was an unfortunate coincidence that another room of the same musjid was inhabited by an extremist Sufi. Although Hadrat Wālā lived there for quite some time, he never spoke to him.

Conferring Religious Blessings To Allāh's Creation

To sum up, Hadrat Wālā had a deep interest in the spiritual path from a young age when he was still a student. He was

occupied in dhikr after pledging bayʻah in 1299 A.H. but focussed more attention to it after 1307 A.H. – as mentioned previously from his letter dated 22 Muharram 1308 A.H. He was very much affected by dhikr and even asked Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's advice on giving up his teaching post. This is gauged from the contents of his fourth letter. He did not get permission to give up his post because of the religious benefits which came with this post. A portion of this letter is quoted below to clarify this point:

> Your honourable letter of fragrance has arrived. Your progress of yearning and longing has brought a lot of joy and happiness. May Allāh *taʻālā* grant you additional blessings. Forsaking employment is inappropriate. This is applicable only to the one who does not have the responsibility of a family. It is unwise to let the family become uneasy. Instructing and guiding people is the closest way to reach Allāh *taʻālā*.

The above letter is dated 22 Muharram 1308 A.H. He states in his fifth letter dated 13 Safar 1308 A.H. : "May Allāh *taʻālā* quench you with a rain of love and keep you longing for more." This also demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's intense thirst and longing of that time.

It becomes clear from the above incidents and conditions that Hadrat Wālā was occupied with academic work and teaching the external sciences from 1301 to 1308 A.H. Countless students qualified under him during this period, many of them departed with Hadīth certificates, and thousands among the masses benefited from his lectures and talks.

Details with regard to his teaching and travelling around to deliver lectures were provided in previous chapters. There is no need to repeat them here. However, it will not be out of place to state that Hadrat Wālā used to explain very difficult and intricate issues in a very simplified manner. The students would not even realize that it was a complex point and they used to be astonished when they realized it later on. As for his public lectures, he used to stand and deliver them for as long as five, six and even seven hours at a time. Even then, the audience was not satisfied and wanted more. All the Muslims of Kānpūr – including those holding different beliefs – were enamoured by his oratory and people of every district

requested him to come and address them. Once, he delivered talks for two months only on the subject of salāh. He went to each district and area and spoke on salāh. Subsequently, so many people began performing salāh that there was no place in the masājid. People became so enthusiastic about salāh that even the rickshaw-pullers would constantly ask their passengers the time so that they could go and perform their salāh.

Hadrat Wālā's stay in Kānpūr caused a stir in Islamic sentiments in the surrounding areas as well. Periodically, he used to print posters and booklets on important and essential rules and regulations. I recall something from my childhood. I was living in Ūr'ī, district Jālūn, which is my second hometown and is about 80 miles from Kānpūr. Some posters of this nature reached our town. My father was so impressed by the contents that he even shortened his pants which was previously below his ankles. As for timetables for dawn and sunset, posters on rules of fasting, sacrificial animals, etc. these used to come to our town from Hadrat Wālā's Madrasah all the time.

Attraction Towards Spiritual Abundance

After this external abundance, Allāh *taʿālā* willed for the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to receive spiritual abundance through Hadrat Wālā. After all, the Dīn cannot be perfected without the spiritual aspect. Consequently, his heart suddenly perceived a powerful pull, and the enthusiasm for dhikr which had been present from the beginning now surged ahead with full force. The flame of love for Allāh *taʿālā* which had been placed in him from the very beginning, which was lying dormant in his heart at the time of his birth, whose sparks were seen in the form of tahajjud salāh in the late hours of the night when he was still a minor and in the form of an intense desire to pledge bayʿah when he was a student, and his engrossment in spiritual exercises during his days as a teacher – flickered from time to time in a superficial manner. The time had now come for it to manifest itself in all its glory. It did not confine itself to encompassing Hadrat Wālā alone but the entire world. It is continuing in its path and, all praise is due to Allāh, intensifying by the day. O Allāh! Increase it, make it all-encompassing, and perfect it.

This enthusiasm and fervour commenced in 1307 A.H. as we had mentioned previously by quoting from *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah*.

Hadrat Wālā's Uncle, Pīrjī Imdād 'Alī

On one side, Hadrat Wālā's flame of love was burning swiftly, while on the other side the vast distance between himself and his shaykh came as a barrier and caused him intense restlessness. Hadrat Wālā was immersed in this confusion and uncertainty when his maternal uncle, Pīrjī Imdād 'Alī Sāhib, who was a well-known and powerful dervish, left Hyderabad for his hometown and happened to pass through Kānpūr. He knew that Hadrat Wālā was residing in Kānpūr and was overcome by a desire to meet him. Pīrjī had a very carefree temperament so he went and stayed over in a lodge. He sent a message to Hadrat Wālā: "If you do not consider it below your dignity, you may come and meet me in the lodge. I haven't seen you since childhood and wish to see you."

When Hadrat Wālā was still very young and was memorizing the Qur'ān, he had met Pīrjī at a function in Kīrānah. Hadrat Wālā attended the function with his father. Pīrjī had asked Hadrat Wālā to recite one section of the Qur'ān and prayed for him. They did not get an opportunity to meet after that because Pīrjī had settled down permanently in Hyderabad. Due to his carefree and ascetic nature, he rarely had an opportunity to come to his hometown [Thānah Bhawan].

Pīrjī possessed an intense and burning love [for Allāh *ta'ālā*]. He was totally carefree and had no contact with friends and relatives. He was naturally daring, audacious and happy-go-lucky. To add to this, he found a shaykh who was also an ascetic and carefree. Consequently, he would often say with full pomp and pride: "Listen! I am free and I am the slave of a free person."

All the above points collectively made him like the dervishes who belonged to the Malāmatīyyah sect. Or, in the words of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, among the Auliyā' Mustahlikīn (Sufis who sought to destroy themselves). But by and large, Pīrjī was carefree in his words [not in actions]. He also took part in 'urs and samā'. He was very particular about salāh and fasting, and his conversations were extremely wise and meaningful. He used to engage in intensely strenuous spiritual exercises and

forms of spiritual exertion. The heat of love within him was so intense that sitting near him would ignite a person's heart, create an aversion for the world and a dislike for all contact with people. However, some of his statements and actions needed some sort of explanation in order to coincide them with the Sharīʿah. And sometimes, even the explanations had to be far-fetched. Despite all this, he was sincere in whatever he did. He was neither a show off nor a materialist.

He was a serious dervish and therefore practised samāʿ. He was so immersed in it that he would carry his instruments of samāʿ wherever he went. This is the general habit of dervishes who practise samāʿ.

Pīrjī Goes To Hadrat Wālā's Madrasah

On one hand, Pīrjī's life and condition were as described above. On the other side, Hadrat Wālā was a famous ʿālim who adhered strictly to the Sunnah. This is why Pīrjī had sent this message: "If you do not consider it below your dignity, you may come and meet me in the lodge." This was also the reason why he did not go to stay with Hadrat Wālā and, instead, stayed over in a lodge. Look at his consideration for 'ulamā' despite his carefree disposition!

The moment Hadrat Wālā heard of his uncle's arrival, he went to the lodge to meet him. Hadrat Wālā insisted on him to come to his house because he could not allow such a senior guest to live in a lodge. Based on his carefree temperament as described above, Pīrjī said: "Miyā! You are a practising ʿālim. Do not take me to your place. People will remark: 'Who is this vagabond and scoundrel whom you brought to your house?'" Hadrat Wālā did not pay any heed to him and took him with. Pīrjī proceeded to Hadrat Wālā's house with all his luggage and possessions, including his samāʿ instruments.

The people in the Madrasah were initially astonished, but when Pīrjī started his conspicuous dervish talks, he ignited the hearts of all. They were captivated and enamoured by him and convinced him to remain for several days with them. Hadrat Wālā relates: "My uncle possessed intense heat and fervour. When he spoke, it seemed as if fire was emanating from his mouth." The following couplet applied to him:

> I am a slave of speech which ignites a fire. Do not speak of things which extinguish a raging fire.

Hadrat Wālā's heart had been ignited from before. Pīrjī's fiery speech and passionate demeanour only served to enflame the fire even more. Hadrat Wālā unintentionally developed an intense urge in his heart to acquire the love of Allāh *taʿālā* from him, no matter how. He will then retract and focus his full attention to dhikr and spiritual exercises. If a person is completely dehydrated out of thirst in a desert, and he sees muddy water in a hole, will he be able to restrain himself from drinking it despite its muddiness!? Will he think to himself that he should wait and when he reaches home, he will drink cold and pure water? Will he do this if his house is still very far away? When a person is intensely thirsty, he even considers sand to be water and hastens towards it. So water was presented to him, although it was muddy. How could he exercise patience and not run towards it!? After all, it [muddy water] is also pure and also beneficial to a certain degree. Maulānā Rūmī says in this regard:

> If a morsel which is covered with soil can also make
> a person mad, what would it do had it been pure!

This is especially so when the soil settles at the bottom and the water comes up purified, and is a manifestation of the saying:

خذ ما صفا ودع ما كدر

Take what is pure and discard what is filthy.

According to Hadrat Wālā, there is a parallel to the above story in the books of jurisprudence. Initially, Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* had given permission to perform ablution with date water.[1] He quoted the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as proof:

تمرة طيبة وماء طهور

It is a wholesome fruit and its water is pure.

Another narration states:

تمرة حلوة وماء عذب

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[1] Water in which dates are soaked and eventually made into an intoxicating drink. This is known as *nabīdh bī at-tamr*.

It is a sweet fruit and its water is sweet.[1]

This could be a clear basis for the above example of water mixed with soil in the sense that the soil is wholesome and the water is pure. Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* did not permit tayammum in the absence of pure water. Instead, he passed the ruling of ablution with date water. Similarly, in the absence of the pure Sufi path, mere external spiritual exercises were not considered sufficient. Instead, preference was given to muddy water. Furthermore, just as it is obligatory to give up using date water once pure water is found, I discarded the muddy path the moment I gained access to pure Sufism. Besides, the muddy path is similar to date water in the sense that both have the ability of causing undesired intoxication. Finally, Imām Abū Hanīfah's last opinion was the impermissibility of ablution with date water and the obligation of tayammum because there is a possibility of this ruling not coinciding with the principles of the Sharī'ah. In the same way, my final analysis is that as long as the pure Sufi path is not found, it is obligatory to confine one's self to the external spiritual exercises, and it is not permissible to choose the adulterated path because of the dangers it entails.

Hadrat Wālā Reverts To Pīrjī

Anyway, Hadrat Wālā saw that his shaykh is in a distant land, across the ocean. While here he is experiencing an intense and hasty quest, and his heart is demanding to find its objective [Allāh *ta'ālā*] no matter how. The means for fulfilling this objective seemed to be right before his eyes. He therefore turned to Pīrjī unwittingly and reverted to him due to his close relationship with him. He expected special attention from him because Hadrat Wālā was like a son to him, and there was an obvious bond and affinity between the two. However, by virtue of the blessings, relationship and companionship of the 'ulamā' and elders, Hadrat Wālā ensured that he remains firm on the principle: "Take what is pure and discard what is filthy."

Hadrat Wālā was quite broad minded and had noble thoughts especially about dervishes. Apart from this single time during the early stages of his life, and that too because of the above-mentioned intense quest which he was experiencing and –

[1] Narrated by Ahmad, Dāraqutnī and Ibn Mājah.

according to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib – because he was still a novice as regards the complexities of the path, caused him to revert to Pīrjī. The following stanzas of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* apply to his reverting.

> O friends! Do not point fingers at a dissatisfied and confused person like me. I have a pearl and am searching for an expert.
>
> Although it is detestable to dye a tattered garment red, I do not consider it detestable because I wash off the colour of ostentation through it.
>
> An admonisher instructed me not to smell the soil at the door of the tavern. Tell him not to find fault with me because I am inhaling the fragrance from the land of Khutan.[1]

Hadrat Wālā's Reasoning

Hadrat Wālā relates the reason for reverting to Pīrjī and the emotions which he was experiencing at the time in a letter which he wrote to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* in order to express his excuse. Hadrat Wālā wrote it in Arabic so that it may remain concealed from the masses who lack understanding. Every word of his letter is immersed in emotion. A few sentences which are appropriate to this discussion are quoted here. The original text is quoted for further clarification.

فيا مولانا، والله إني كنت في ذلك الزمان غريقاً في بحار الحيرة والطلب، واتطلع إلى من يخلصني من ذاك والوصب والنصب، إذ نادى مناد من قريب من غير إرادتي وقصدي: هات يدك بيدي أنجيك من هذا البحر الحجر. وإن الغريق يتثبت بكل حشيش لما هو فيه من التهويش والتشويش. وقد كنت من وراء البحار من حبيبي ومغيثي وطبيبي، ومع هذا ما تركت بحمد الله يوما العمل بقول الأكابر: خذ ما صفا ودع ما كدر.

O Maulānā! During those days, I was drowning in the ocean of bewilderment and searching for someone who could rescue me from that suffering and hardship. Suddenly a very close caller called out to me without any intention and will from my side. He said: "Give my your hand and I will rescue you from this rocky

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[1] A district in Turkistan famous for musk.

ocean." A drowning man clutches at every straw out of excitement and confusion. Furthermore, I was oceans away from my beloved, my saviour and my physician. Despite all this – all praise is due to Allāh - I never, for once, lost sight of the advice of the elders when they said: "Take what is pure and discard what is filthy."

Commencement Of Burning Love

The natural consequence of the above conditions resulted in Hadrat Wālā reverting to his affectionate uncle and commencing in dhikr and spiritual exercises with particular attention. The year 1307 A.H. marks the next stage in his life. The previous stage was that of academic interest, this new stage was that of burning love.

The commencement of dhikr and spiritual exercises transformed Hadrat Wālā completely. His attachment to spiritual occupations increased to the extent that he developed an aversion for all interactions. He even wrote to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and asked him if he could give up his employment. However, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib advised him to give preference to serving Allāh's creation and did not permit him to resign from his employment. The time was not right as yet; there was a need to establish himself. As per Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's instruction, he continued teaching but also occupied himself in dhikr and spiritual exercises.

Departing To Meet Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

By the year 1310 A.H. his yearning to reach Allāh *taʿālā* increased to the extent that it created a restlessness and burning desire in him. The intensity and urgency of his quest did not permit him any peace. This condition is defined by the Sufis as *shauq* (yearning). Under the circumstances, he constantly thought of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's request when he had presented himself to him the first time: "Ashraf ʿAlī, stay with me for six months." This request remained concealed in Hadrat Wālā's heart for ten years because he could not fulfil it in the presence of the rights which he owed to his father. Details in this regard were provided previously.

Hadrat Wālā's present condition made him perceive the urgent need to fulfil the above request. Moreover, the demise of his father removed that obstacle. He therefore turned all his

attention to making preparations for absenting himself from his teaching obligations so that he could spend some time in Makkah Muʿazzamah. He succeeded quite quickly in this regard because the intense yearning, excessive and powerful burning desire, strong craving to reach his objective, urgency to traverse the path, the pull and magnetism of love – or, in reality, Allāh's own pull – removed all the obstacles and impediments from his path. By the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, the desire which could not be realized for the last ten years was now completed very easily and without any problems within a few months.

Hadrat Wālā departed for Makkah Muʿazzamah with the intention of remaining in the company of his shaykh for six months. He seemed to be demonstrating the following panegyric of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh*:

> When I decide to go to the alley of my beloved, I will spread its fragrance with my breathing.
>
> I will sacrifice my honour which I acquired through my intelligence and Dīn for the soil which is on the path of this most beautiful beloved.
>
> Whatever time of my life which passed without drink and the beloved was wasted. I will remain occupied in my work from today.
>
> I will lose myself in the remembrance of your eyes, and strengthen the foundations of past times.
>
> O Hāfiz! The sincerity of the heart cannot be acquired through competition and exhibition. Instead, I will choose the path of love and intoxication [in Allāh's love].

Hadrat Wālā's enthusiasm and yearning was as described by Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh*:

> In my desire for my beloved, I will intoxicate myself and go dancing like an atom towards the brilliant fountain of the sun.
>
> I have never travelled from my hometown. But now I desire travelling to you out of love for you.

In short, Hadrat Wālā presented himself before Hadrat Hājī Sāhib with absolute yearning, and remained engrossed in

spiritual abundance with full enthusiasm. The moment he reached there, all his restlessness and trembling which he had been experiencing for some time were now transformed into peace and tranquillity. A condition which the Sufis refer to as *uns* (affinity) now came to the fore.

Special Attention

Based on the special spiritual relationship by which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was impressed, he had personally requested Hadrat Wālā to come to Makkah Muʿazzamah. When he did present himself the first time, he personally requested Hadrat Wālā to stay with him for six months. So he was yearning to meet Hadrat Wālā from before, and now that he reached Makkah Muʿazzamah, he was completely overjoyed. Although there is no comparison, we could say it was like the joy which Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* experienced when he was rejoined by Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib now directed his special attention and favours towards Hadrat Wālā. His special affection towards him caused others to become jealous – to the extent that Hadrat Wālā says: "I used to think that it would be better if Hadrat Hājī Sāhib did not direct so much of attention to me in the presence of others." Hadrat Wālā eventually felt so threatened by the envious ones that he cut short his stay by about ten days from his original six months. He thought to himself that he is presently accepted in Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's sight. It must not happen that the enviers cause Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to have ill feelings towards him. He should rather leave while he is happy with him.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Confidence

On one side we have Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's strong ability to convey, and on the other side we have Hadrat Wālā's ability to receive and derive benefit. Consequently, within a few days this resulted in a strong affinity between the two, and Hadrat Hājī Sāhib spontaneously remarked: "You are totally on my way." As we had mentioned before, when Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had the occasion to hear Hadrat Wālā's lecture or read any of his writings, he would say: "May Allāh reward you. You have expounded on what is in my chest." If, in the course of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib delivering a discourse, someone had to pose a good question, he would point towards Hadrat Wālā and say: "Ask him. He has understood it very well." He used to say this

although, as in Hadrat Wālā's own words: "I used to sit silently with absolute respect before Hadrat. Very rarely did I have any need to say anything."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's spiritual insight! Through the light of his understanding and far-sightedness, he could fathom Hadrat Wālā's intelligence and astuteness. And look at the extent of the envy! Despite Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's clear instruction, no one reverted to Hadrat Wālā to answer the question which they had posed. By virtue of the intense affinity between the two, we could say that Hadrat Wālā became a manifestation of the following couplet:

> I became you and you became me. I became the body and you became the life so that, after this, no one will be able to say that I am a separate person and you are a separate person.

Complete Affinity Between Mentor And Disciple

I recall another incident with regard to affinity. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib wanted to write an advisory letter to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān Marhūm. Several people prepared rough letters as per Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's instruction but none of them appealed to him. He then asked Hadrat Wālā to compose a letter and, when he did, he really approved of it. But some people raised a useless objection that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān will assume that it was written under the instruction of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and this assumption will be detrimental to him. They added that it was unwise to send the letter. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was very soft by nature and, as per his habit, said: "Very well, as you say." The letter was not sent. On several occasions later on, he said: "Had that letter been sent, there would have been hope for his reformation, but our friends did not feel the same way."

(Note: This letter has been published towards the end of Hadrat Wālā's book, *Islāh al-Khiyāl*).

Translation of *Tanwīr* And Blessings In His Time

During his stay in Makkah Muʿazzamah, Hadrat Wālā translated the book, *Iksīr fī Ithbāt at-Taqdīr*, under the instruction of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. Whatever Hadrat Wālā translated in a day would be read to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib that same day. Hadrat would be most pleased with the translation

and say: "You must try to translate more because Allāh *taʿālā* has blessed you in your time." Subsequently, this prediction proved to be true to the letter. Hadrat Wālā's numerous written works bear testimony to this. On one occasion, he received almost fifty letters at once. When he completed replying to all and the time that it took him was estimated, it worked out to less than two minutes per letter. This, despite the fact that he receives lengthy letters which take up a lot of time just to read, and even more to reply. In most cases, the blessing in his time – which was from Allāh *taʿālā* – took the form of being safeguarded from occasions, incidents and events when he was engrossed in an important religious task. For example, when he received an extra number of letters, a fewer number of people would come to him for amulets. Consequently, on the above-mentioned occasion when he received fifty letters and was busy replying to them, not a single person came to him for an amulet. Hadrat Wālā made special mention of this to those who were present and expressed his gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Wālā relates with regard to the period when he was writing *Tafsīr Bayān al-Qur'ān*: "By Allāh's grace, during this lengthy period of two and a half years, I did not experience the slightest touch of an illness and did not miss out a single day. I did not even complain of any slight cold or fever although Thānah Bhawan was specifically experiencing a plague for some time. It did cause inconvenience to a certain extent because I used to attend many funerals and burials. But it was not so serious to the extent that I could not make up for it later on. During this period, I used to pray to Allāh *taʿālā* I must not die before I complete the *Tafsīr*."

Another reason for the blessing in Hadrat Wālā's time was that when he used to sit down to write anything, the thoughts and subject matter used to just flow into him immediately. I have observed him replying to very confusing letters in a simple, satisfying and convincing manner. When it came to writing on complex academic issues, he would explain them with a flowing pen. Despite this, it was so comprehensive in nature that no essential point or most minute matter was left out.

Blessing in his time also took the following form: If he had to search for any material on a particular subject, the place where he could find it would come to his mind immediately; or his

eyes will fall on the exact spot he was looking for just by flipping through a book.

Apart from following a strict timetable, proper organization and absence of uncertainty being the most important contributors to the blessing in his time, a very important contributor was that when he commenced a task, his heart would develop a restlessness and impose on his temperament as long as the task was not completed. There were times when he spent almost entire nights trying to complete some of his books without taking a single minute's rest. I personally saw this on a few occasions during my stay in the Khānqāh.

Hadrat Wālā says: "Even if I do not get the inspiration to engage in Allāh's remembrance, I would make an effort to empty my heart so that if I do get the inspiration, I would at least be able to direct it easily towards His remembrance and I will not have any obstacle from turning to Him at that time. This is why I get disturbed by confusing talks, thus causing a change in me. I like for a conversation to be terminated quickly so that I may regain my focus as quickly as possible and not remain stuck at one point. People are in the habit of long, drawn out and confusing conversations, leaving me unnecessarily stuck at one point."

By Allāh's grace, Hadrat Wālā would rarely fall ill. Even if he does encounter a complaint, by Allāh's grace, it is removed quite quickly. Very often we noticed lengthy illnesses which normally remain with a person for several months leaving Hadrat Wālā within a few days without causing him much disturbance in his work. Hadrat Wālā has so much of work that if he were to leave it for a few days, it would not be possible for him to complete it. People always see Hadrat Wālā occupied in some work or the other all the time. In fact, it is most astonishing to observe him carrying out several tasks at once. He is often seen reading the Qur'ān from memory, while he is busy replying letters. The seekers too are experiencing the effects of his focus on them, while he himself is not for a moment unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā*. Then you see him deep in thought over complex rulings and injunctions which are presented to him quite often. He would often say: "I understood such and such ruling while I was walking", "I understood such and such ruling while I was in salāh", "The solution to such and such objection was realized while I was doing such and

such thing” and so on. Allāh *taʿālā* also helps him from the unseen in the sense that he rarely falls ill – as mentioned above – and when he does fall ill, then as far as possible he does not leave his work aside unless he is totally compelled.

Incidentally, today – 19 Jumādā ath-Thāniyah 1353 A.H. – while I was writing on this subject, Hadrat Wālā was experiencing a severe pain in his stomach. The pain was rising up to his kidney, but he bore it and led the people in the fajr salāh without letting anyone know about it. Everyone was surprised over the fact that – contrary to his norm – he read very short sūrahs in the salāh and then continued with his work. It was only after eight that his attendants came to know that he resorted to a heat pack and other measures through which all the pain disappeared within an hour. Hadrat Wālā then presented himself for his morning assembly and roused the seekers. Although he had experienced a very severe pain, Allāh *taʿālā* removed it very quickly. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. When the pain left him, Hadrat Wālā addressed the people and said: “Since I am not used to such pains, a short spell of pain causes me so much of weakness that I feel as if I had been ill for several months. I could feel the pain creeping right through me but Allāh *taʿālā* quickly showered His grace on me.”

This entire subject on blessing in Hadrat Wālā’s time came in just by the way. I now return to incidents related to the attention, focus and glad tidings which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib showered on Hadrat Wālā.

Exposition Of Tauhīd

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā imbibed all spiritual treasures by remaining in the company of his shaykh. However, in the course of his stay with him, the exposition of tauhīd reached its peak. Tauhīd is the foundation of the Sharīʿah and Tarīqah, and the core of Sufism. Its necessary outcome is servitude which is the highest station in the path. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib specifically possessed these treasures which have been the hallmarks of the Imdādīyyah family, and – by the permission of Allāh *taʿālā* – transferred totally and perfectly from his chest to the chest of Hadrat Wālā and passed it on forever in this way. The effects of this transferral are glaringly seen to this day in Hadrat Wālā’s statements, actions, deeds, conditions, movements and moments of inactivity. The

blessings of Hadrat Wālā which have spread in the East and West are actually rays and splendours of that same sun and moon.

An Ode

Hadrat Wālā was so overcome by tauhīd during his stay in Makkah Muʿazzamah that he even composed an emotional ode which contained nothing but themes of tauhīd. Although the meanings were acceptable, he retracted from it because it was written while he was overcome by emotion and was not a true depiction of the obvious. Bearing in mind he retracted from it, he did not permit me to include it here. But I obtained his permission to include two simple lines at this point.

> I could not find him as long as vanity was in me. Once I searched and found him, I myself became non-existent. O Āh! What was your worth? Whatever you have now is on account of Imdād's quest and generosity.

Hadrat Wālā uses "Āh" as his pen name in this ode. It demonstrates the extent to which he was overpowered by burning love for Allāh *taʿālā*. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was most impressed by the ode because it was a true reflection of Hadrat Wālā's condition. When some spiritual masters came to visit him, he requested Hadrat Wālā to render it before them. On completing its rendition, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said to the guests: "These are not just his words but his real condition."

The Book, *Anwār al-Wujūd*

Also during his stay in Makkah Muʿazzamah, Hadrat Wālā wrote a book on the issue of tanazulāt-e-sittah which was specifically connected to tauhīd wujūdī (unity of existence) The book was titled *Anwār al-Wujūd fī Atwār ash-Shuhūd*. A section of this book is devoted to investigating the comprehensiveness of man. Hadrat Wālā read these themes to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib who was extremely overjoyed when he heard them, and said: "You have expounded my chest completely." This statement clearly demonstrates that the special thing which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had placed in Hadrat Wālā's chest was tauhīd. I recall one other incident which occurred during this period.

An Explanation Of Wahdatul Wujūd

Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Hasan Sāhib was a hajj guide in Makkah Mu'azzamah. He expressed his reservations about the issue of wahdatul wujūd (unity of existence) to Hadrat Wālā by saying: "It appears to be in direct conflict with īmān." Hadrat Wālā said: "You must come to me one day and I will explain it to you. Allāh willing, you yourself will agree that a person's īmān cannot be complete without believing in it." Subsequently, Hadrat Wālā explained it to him one Friday morning for two continuous hours. At the end of it, he got up and said: "The necessity of it has been proven in such a manner that īmān cannot be realized without it." Hadrat Wālā had restricted it to completion of īmān, but this Maulānā now went one step further by saying that īmān is dependent on this belief. The Maulānā went happily to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and related the incident to him. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib responded cheerfully: "Yes indeed, he [Hadrat Wālā] understands this subject very well."

Intense Servitude

I recall one other incident which was related by Hadrat Wālā himself and which occurred during the same time. Qārī 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib was holding a year-end jalsah for his madrasah so he insisted on Hadrat Wālā to deliver a speech. Hadrat Wālā considered it disrespectful to deliver a speech in Makkah Mu'azzamah so he declined. The people of the madrasah went to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to intercede on their behalf, and Hadrat Wālā was now compelled to agree. When he reached the jalsah, a senior Makkan scholar, Muftī Muhammad 'Abbās was also present. Hadrat Wālā said: "How can I say anything in the presence of such a senior person?" The people were very enthusiastic about listening to Hadrat Wālā so they even got this scholar to intercede on their behalf. Hadrat Wālā had no alternative but to agree. The function commenced with a recitation from the Qur'ān. It was rendered in a very beautiful tone by a Turkish student. Hadrat Wālā relates: "I never heard such a touching and enchanting recitation in my entire life. The whole assembly was enveloped in silence. I had lost my senses and was breathing convulsively. When I was requested to deliver my speech, I said: 'If you really wanted me to deliver a speech, you should not have asked this boy to read the Qur'ān. I do not have the ability to speak now.' This was really

my situation. I was so affected by his recitation that I just could not speak. I had lost control over my hands and legs, my heart and my tongue. When the people looked at me, they too realized that I was definitely not in a position to address them at present."

The people had no cure for Hadrat Wālā's excuse so they could not do anything about it. Their desire to listen to him was left unfulfilled. In the first place, Hadrat Wālā did not even feel like delivering a speech there, so Allāh *taʿālā* provided the means for him not to speak. This incident clearly demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's deep respect, and the pain and burning of his heart. These qualities stemmed from his intense servitude, exposition of tauhīd and awe for Allāh *taʿālā*. All these were the results of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's blessed company and special attention.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Special Attention

I now relate some incidents which demonstrate Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's special attention towards Hadrat Wālā.

On one occasion Hadrat Wālā felt an intense urge to go and see Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, so he went to see him although it was his time of solitude. He explained the reason for coming at such an hour and apologized to him. Hadrat replied: "This time of solitude is reserved to keep away outsiders from coming to me, not for dear ones." They then continued conversing for some time.

Hadrat Wālā reached his shaykh's assembly a bit late on one occasion because he was gone to visit some graves and other places of interest [in Makkah]. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib waited for quite some time for his arrival and asked him the reason for his delay. Hadrat Wālā said: "I was gone to visit some of the holy places and graves." He replied: "You did very well. The places of the pious are substitutes for the pious."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Assembly of Samā'

A person belonging to the Shādhilīyyah Sufi Family invited Hadrat Hājī Sāhib together with his attendants. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib accepted on condition a samāʿ session is also held. Some of the attendants who were ʿulamā' hesitated about attending and excused themselves. But Hadrat Wālā joined Hadrat Hājī Sāhib without any hesitation. When the attendants were speaking among themselves, Hadrat Wālā said: "I will certainly

attend. I am not more pious than Hadrat. If Hadrat is attending, how can we hesitate!?"

Anyway, Hadrat Wālā joined in. On reaching there and before the food could be dished out, the attendants of the shaykh were standing in a circle. One of them who was known as the Munshid, commenced with the dhikr of one of Allāh's names. Others in the circle joined him and they continued repeating the name. They all fell silent after some time. The Munshid then rendered a few lines of poetry on love for Allāh *ta'ālā*. He had a plain but pleasing tune. He was an elderly person. He then commenced with another one of Allāh's names and the others joined in. They continued the dhikr in this manner. In short, it was not an assembly of samā' but an enjoyable assembly of dhikr. When everything was over, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib asked Hadrat Wālā: "Did you enjoy it?" He replied: "Hadrat, I enjoyed it thoroughly." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said: "This is what you call samā'. Our friends [who did not join us] hesitated unnecessarily. I had purposefully laid down the condition of samā' when we were invited so that I could demonstrate what the limit of samā' is."

Preserving Hadrat Wālā's Rank

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was most pleased by Hadrat Wālā's unhesitating participation, as opposed to some of the other 'ulamā' attendants who did not. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was very concerned about preserving Hadrat Wālā's rank and dignity. Hadrat Wālā's family had arrived in Makkah after him. They unknowingly appointed an unknown hajj guide. Hadrat Wālā now had to go to the chief hajj guide to change their guide. The chief was well-known for his temper. When Hadrat Wālā returned from there, the first thing Hadrat Hājī Sāhib asked him with a bit of trepidation was: "First tell me, how did he treat you?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Through Hadrat's attention and prayers, he received me very warmly and made the necessary arrangements for a guide as I wanted." Hadrat was very happy to hear this. After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was very concerned about anyone looking with scorn at any of his associates. He was very affectionate and most concerned about his attendants."

You Must Remain As I Am

Hadrat Wālā's senior wife and his maternal aunt reached Makkah Muʿazzamah while he was still there. His maternal aunt said to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib with regard to Hadrat Wālā: "You must pray for him so that he gets children." He went outside and said to Hadrat Wālā: "Your aunt requested me to pray for you so that you get children. I carried out her request but my heart desires that you remain as I am, you must be in the same condition as I am." He then went at length in speaking about the ills of the children of those days. Hadrat Wālā said: "I am pleased for myself whatever condition Hadrat likes for himself." That is, to have no children. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was very happy to hear it. This demonstrates the special bond which he had with Hadrat Wālā in the sense that he wanted him to be similar to him in every way.

Consequently, Hadrat Wālā has no children even though he entered into a second marriage. Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows what the future holds. This is the external similarity. As for the internal similarity, by Allāh's grace he is certainly bearing Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's ways.

When Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was giving leave to Hadrat Wālā, he said one thing with regard to his senior wife: "She must take just one lesson from me. Whatever you get, you must spend." This is exactly how her condition is. She neither experiences poverty nor does she amass anything. She is so content and generous that whatever Allāh *taʿālā* gives her and whatever she receives in her share, she spends it on her relatives and needy ones. She does not bother about poverty in the least. In fact, Hadrat Wālā stresses on her to spend for her own good. Just as he is very particular and organized about all other matters, he is very particular about spending. He does it with an open heart whenever the occasion demands. Despite this, something or the other gets amassed. He distributes it quickly to those who are eligible for it, spends in worthy causes and, in this way, gets it out of his ownership.

To sum up, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib desired Hadrat Wālā to be similar to him in every matter. Allāh *taʿālā* made him a true and complete deputy and representative of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's unique path and blessed an entire world through him. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable these blessings to continue and may He enable me to receive these blessings to the full. Āmīn.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Statement With Regard to Hadrat Wālā

A Maulānā of Nadwah complained to Hadrat Hajī Sāhib about Hadrat Wālā's lack of participation in the Nadwah programme and said that he is against them. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib refuted this immediately by saying: "He [Hadrat Wālā] does not even have an element of conflict in his temperament."

By the will of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā is so averse to conflict and so broad-minded that, as far as possible, he tries to explain the statements and actions of even his opponents and always resorts to good thoughts about them even though he may not agree with them. Just the other day he was speaking about something and then added with much emphasis: "No matter how low the ʿulamā' may have stooped, I consider their presence for the continuity of Dīn so essential that even if they all unite to label me an unbeliever (kāfir), I will continue praying for their continued existence. Even though they may be fanatical on certain issues and speak ill of me, they are after all teaching the Qur'ān and Hadīth, and the Dīn is being maintained through them. I consider them to be a thousand times better than the ungodly claimants to Islam who are bent on getting rid off Islam. Allāh *taʿālā* knows that I have no personal motives in this broad-mindedness. Instead, the reason for it is nothing but upholding the limits of Dīn."

Hadrat Wālā's Broad-Mindedness

I recall another statement of Hadrat Wālā on this subject. He said: "I even feel sorry for those materialistic Sufis who are only concerned about eating and earning. I think to myself that they are of no use, so what else can they do? How else can they fill their bellies? All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* He provided for us because had He not, He alone knows what our condition and intentions would have been. May Allāh *taʿālā* save us from trials and tests. Although I rationally and doctrinally consider their ways to be evil, I naturally feel sorry for them. Consequently, instead of being only angry at them, my compassion towards them causes me to pray for their reformation and guidance. Although I detest their occupation of begging, I like their quality of praying for everyone. Apart from waiting for handouts from people, they are not engrossed in any conflicts, disturbances and sectarianism. They are only worried about their material gains. In the same way, although I

am doctrinally and to a large extent naturally averse to the unbelievers, I think to myself that there is wisdom in these conceptual matters, and therefore have a balance in my anger towards them. Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* makes reference to these wisdoms in the following couplet:

> Unbelief is necessary in the occupation of love for Allāh *taʿālā*. If there was no Abū Lahab, who will the Fire burn?

Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* also says in this regard:

> If unbelief comes from the Creator, there is wisdom in it. If it comes from us, it is an affliction.

I [the author] say: It is a most unique and extraordinary ability to be able to fulfil the rights of two opposites. The ability to combine two opposites is a mark of erudition.

My Grandson

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib displayed so much of affection towards Hadrat Wālā that if anyone were to point to him and ask: "Who is this?" He would reply: "This is my grandson." Hadrat Wālā relates: "Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had mentioned to me that we were distantly related. This is why he referred to me as his grandson. However, since this family relationship with him is totally insignificant in the face of the spiritual relationship which I have with him, I was neither interested in knowing about the family tie nor do I remember the details in this regard."

Special Address

Due to his intense liking for Hadrat Wālā, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib neither addressed him by the word "Maulwī" nor any other titles of respect. He used to merely address him as Miyā Ashraf ʿAlī. He advised him on several matters by addressing him in this manner. For example, he drank cold water one day and said: "Miyā Ashraf ʿAlī! When you drink water, ensure it is cold so that when you thank Allāh *taʿālā* verbally for it, your heart also joins in the thanks."

Glad Tidings About Expertise in Tafsīr And Tasawwuf

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib gave the following glad tiding to Hadrat Wālā: "You will have a special attachment with tafsīr and

tasawwuf." Hadrat Wālā's perfect affinity with these two sciences is clearer than the sun. His unparalleled tafsīr, *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, is testimony to the first. As for the second, all his written works testify to his expertise in this field. After relating this glad tiding, Hadrat Wālā says: "I blundered by not requesting him to pray for affinity with other religious sciences, especially Hadīth and jurisprudence."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Library

When Hadrat Wālā was departing, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib wanted to hand over his entire library to him. But he, due to his intense thirst for spiritual abundance, said: "Hadrat! What is there in the books! What will I do with those books? You should rather give me some of the treasures from your blessed chest." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was overcome and said: "Yes Miyā, yes! You are right. What is there in the books?"

> Cast a hundred books and a hundred pages in the fire. Make your chest into a garden with the light of Allāh.

Since Hadrat Wālā had refused out of his current spiritual condition, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib did not persist despite wanting to give his library to him. He did not want that condition to be extinguished. After some time, he had all the books parcelled and was about to send them to Hadrat Wālā with a person who was heading for India. However, some of those who were envious of Hadrat Wālā presented to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib a deed of endowment. They had taken his seal secretly and stamped the deed with it. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had no alternative, but he repeatedly said: "I do not recall ever placing these books as endowments." When he was on his death bed, he advised Maulānā Muhammad Saʿīd Sāhib Kīrānwī to send the books to Hadrat Wālā. If he refuses to accept them, they must be handed over to Madrasah Saulatiyah [in Makkah]. Maulānā Muhammad Saʿīd Sāhib wrote to Hadrat Wālā but the letter was lost in the post. The books were given over to Madrasah Saulatiyah. When Hadrat Wālā was informed later on, he said: "Even if I received the letter, I would have done the same thing [i.e. given the books to Madrasah Saulatiyah]."

My Mahīn Maulwī

After Hadrat Wālā returned to India, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib would constantly convey salām to him via the pilgrims who had come to perform hajj or ʿumrah. He used to say: "Convey my salām to my mahīn maulwī." The word mahīn refers to a person who is very particular, meticulous and of very fine temperament. This demonstrates Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's high level of spiritual insight because Hadrat Wālā used to sit absolutely silent in his assemblies. Despite this, he was able to fathom Hadrat Wālā's temperament so accurately.

Muslims Will Benefit Tremendously From You

On his return, Hadrat Wālā wrote a few books, e.g. *Jazā' al-Aʿmāl, Furūʿ al-Īmān*, etc. and sent them to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. He also took particular pains to send *Iksīr Tarjumah Tanwīr* by having it bound and writing his own couplet on the cover:

> I have presented an oyster shell to the ocean. I will be highly honoured and consider it a great virtue if the ocean accepts it from me.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was most pleased when he had a look at the books. He dictated a reply which read: "Inshā Allāh, Muslims will benefit tremendously from you." By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this prediction and prayer was realized to the letter.

Prayers And Glad Tidings In Absentia

Prayers, glad tidings and special words of the above nature are to be found in *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah*. Some of them are quoted in sequence here. Bearing in mind that these are mere quotations, the names of those who conveyed the letters, the dates of their arrival and other similar information which is to be found in the letters but is of no relevance to our subject will be removed. Such places will be left blank with dots. At the end of each quotation, its source together with the date will be mentioned so that a person of insight may be able to ascertain the different levels of Hadrat Wālā's spiritual progress.

1. You must always inform me of your condition and of any new condition which your associates experience. (Letter no. 1, dated 22 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1303 A.H.)

2. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable you to realize all your desires and fulfil all your wishes. Āmīn. (Letter no. 2, dated 15 Rajab 1304 A.H.)

3. May Allāh *taʿālā*…turn you away…from everything apart from Him and direct you solely towards Him. Āmīn.

I was overjoyed when I heard that you gave up studying medicine and returned to Kānpūr to occupy yourself in serving Dīn. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you in your services and enable all Muslims to benefit from your blessings. I had advised you previously to hold on firmly to Dīn, and the world will automatically be at your service in an excellent form. No matter what, you people are the inheritors of the Prophets. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred high positions to you by creating you for the guidance of His creation. You should therefore bear in mind your objective over everything else. (Letter no. 3, dated 12 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1306 A.H.)

4. Your honourable letter of fragrance has arrived. Your progress of yearning and longing has brought a lot of joy and happiness. May Allāh *taʿālā* grant you additional blessings. Forsaking employment is inappropriate. This is applicable only to the one who does not have the responsibility of a family. It is unwise to let the family become uneasy. Instructing and guiding people is the closest way to reach Allāh *taʿālā*. (Letter no. 4, dated 22 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1308 A.H.)

5. May Allāh *taʿālā* quench you with a rain of love and keep you longing for more. (Letter no. 5, dated 13 Safar 1308 A.H.)

6. I received your beloved letter and gift of recognition. It pleased me greatly and I am most thankful. May Allāh *taʿālā* maintain you in His pleasure. You must remain occupied in your work; Allāh *taʿālā* is the one who guides and helps. It is nothing astonishing to turn soil into gold. A fakir is fully aware of his helpless condition. (Letter no. 6, dated 21 Dhū al-Hijjah 1308 A.H.)

7. I am concerned over the fact that I did not hear about your wellbeing and condition since quite some time. May Allāh *taʿālā* maintain you in His pleasure and keep you under His protection. (Letter no. 8, date unknown)

8. Your letter…reached me. I am most grateful for it. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with progress in both worlds. Although

Maulwī Ahmad Hasan Sāhib had informed me about your safe arrival in Kānpūr, I was waiting anxiously for your letter. All praise is due to Allāh, you and your companions reached safely. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless this journey of yours. Inform us of your conditions periodically. (Letter no. 9, dated 20 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 1312 A.H.)

9. Your letter…reached me. I am most grateful for it. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with progress in both worlds and confer you with His love. All praise is due to Allāh, I am well. I am praying for you. You wrote about speaking about Allāh's bounties. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to make you an embodiment of: "If you are grateful, I will give you more." All praise is due to Allāh, I was very happy to hear this. May Allāh *taʿālā* shower the creation through you, bestow the blessings of the pious on you and confer you with His love. Shāh Sāhib is your Pīr Bhāi and a righteous man. Show mercy on his situation, and when he asks you anything with regard to dhikr, etc. you must tell him. Allāh *taʿālā* will be happy with you. (Letter no. 11, dated 18 Jumādā 1312 A.H)

10. I was very happy and grateful for receiving your letter. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with His pleasure, enthusiasm and a good death. Most of the time I am occupied in praying for you and for courage for you. (Letter no. 12, dated 12 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1312 A.H.)

11. I received your letter and the shajarah (spiritual family tree), and am most grateful for them. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer you with the blessings of the elders of the Spiritual Lineages. I and those who were present were most pleased at seeing it. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you happy. (Letter no. 13, dated 1 Dhū al-Hijjah 1312 A.H.)

12. I received your letter together with the gift of the leather prayer mat… I am most grateful. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer you with His love and pleasure. I request your prayers for a good death for me. (Letter no. 14, dated 23 Dhū al-Hijjah 1312 A.H.)

13. I received your letter together with a gift of five rupees. I am most grateful. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer you with His love, pleasure and a good death. May He bless you in your wealth and life. I did not hear from you for some time and was quite concerned. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you and me with a good death. (Letter no. 15, dated 1 Dhū al-Hijjah 1312 A.H.)

14. I had been waiting since many days for your letter. All praise is due to Allāh it reached me at the exact time when I was expecting it. I was extremely overjoyed at reading it. I am waiting in anticipation to see your two books. If you have already sent them, well and good. If not, send them immediately. (Letter no. 16, dated 8 Safar 1313 A.H.)

15. Peace be to you, my heart is with you. All praise is due to Allāh, I am well and pray to Allāh daily for your wellbeing. I was most pleased to receive your letter…May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you forever overflowing and intoxicated in His remembrance, yearning for Him and various spiritual ecstasies. I have both your books in front of me. You want to know whether you should print both or just one. It is left to you. Both are not without benefit. The best person is the one who is of benefit to people. I also received sample pages of *Tanwīr*. They were read to me and I thoroughly enjoyed them. You must inform me of the costs for printing *Tanwīr* – Allāh willing – we can send money from here as well. My wealth is always freely available for you.

You asked for my advice with regard to participating in Nadwatul ʿUlamā'.

> I will not tell you to do a particular thing or to abstain from doing something. Think of what is best and do what is easy.

Do what is conducive to your temperament. However, it is necessary for a seeker to sever himself from people. Allāh *taʿālā* personally showers on the one engaged in His remembrance. When a person experiences affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*, he recoils from the creation. The steps which were taken by yourself and Maulwī Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī seem to be most correct. (Letter no. 17, dated 8 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 1313 A.H.)

16. I gave original copies of *Mathnawī* to you and to Ahmad Hasan Sāhib. You must keep it with you; Allāh *taʿālā* will bless you…I received the books *Iksīr* and *Anwār al-Wujūd fī Atwār ash-Shuhūd* and was made aware of them in your letter. I felt overjoyed. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you. Inshā Allāh you will progress day by day. I am spiritually present with you all the time. I have accepted those who requested Bayʿah ʿUthmānī. May Allāh *taʿālā* give them success. Āmīn. You must teach

them some practices according to their capabilities. (Letter no. 18, dated 22 Jumādā 1313 A.H.)

17. I received your letter…It brought delight to me. Māshā Allāh, I was very pleased to hear about the enthusiasm and eagerness of you and your associates. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you forever engrossed in His remembrance, give you progress day by day and convey you to your fundamental objective. Āmīn. (Letter no. 19)

18. I make duʿā' for progress in your stages. Be rest assured that all will be accomplished according to your wishes.

19. I received all the gifts which you sent. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you with the Haramayn Sharīfayn, enable you to dive in the ocean of love and bless you with the attainment of your objective. I am spiritually present with you all the time. Love from the heart is needed; everything is achieved through it. (Letter no. 21, date received 9 Muharram 1314 A.H.)

20. I pray for an increase in your enthusiasm together with focus and satisfaction of the heart…Allāh willing, your temperament will experience rectitude and success, and your thoughts will become focussed. (Letter no. 23, dated 1313 A.H.)

21. I received your letter which included information about your spiritual conditions and various situations. The good news about your spiritual progress brought immense joy to me. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with more progress daily. I am always praying for you. Although I was not feeling too well, my heart was delighted at hearing about your spiritual condition and I could literally feel myself recovering. (Letter no. 27, dated 11 Safar 1314 A.H.)

22. I think of you all the time. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer you with the highest ranks and may your blessings continue forever. (Letter no. 26, dated 25 Safar 1314 A.H.

23. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you forever hale and hearty, and always occupied in His remembrance. Āmīn. As per your request, I admitted Maulwī Is-hāq ʿAlī Sāhib. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless him. You must teach him a few forms of dhikr and so on according to his capacity. (Letter no. 27, dated 5 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1314 A.H.)

24. The spiritual conditions and situations which you described in your letter are, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*,

excellent and praiseworthy. Inshā Allāh, you will make more progress, be rest assured. I always think of you. In my previous letter I had stated that if your heart is no longer attached to Kānpūr, it will be suitable for you to return to Thānah Bhawan which is, after all, your hometown. I did not mean that you must leave for Thānah Bhawan even if there is no need. Rather, I feel that as long as the people of Kānpūr are benefiting from you and they too are comfortable with you and listen to you, it does not appear good to leave and deprive the seekers there. Yes, if for some reason you are fed up and you want to leave Kānpūr, then it was my view that instead of going to any other place, you should rather go to Thānah Bhawan. (Letter no. 28, dated 12 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1314 A.H.)

25. I received your letter at the exact time when I had been waiting for it. It brought much joy to me. My heart is delighted at hearing about your spiritual conditions. These are thousands and thousands of favours of Allāh *taʿālā* for having given you this bounty. May Allāh *taʿālā* give you progress and also to all our beloved associates. Āmīn.

Māshā Allāh all your conditions are praiseworthy. Inshā Allāh, you yourself will gauge their praiseworthiness. Express thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* and constantly ask Him for more. You resorted to a lot of wisdom in the careful consideration which you gave about moving to Thānah Bhawan. Remain attached to Allāh *taʿālā* no matter where you are. The people of Kānpūr are deeply grateful to you and they are benefiting from you. So for all practical reasons, it seems most appropriate for you to remain there. Maintain your contact with Kānpūr for as long as Allāh *taʿālā* wills. You can then go to Thānah Bhawan after placing all your trust in Allāh *taʿālā* without entering into the employ of anyone. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator of the means, He will set right all your affairs. Allāh willing, you will not have to hesitate or doubt in any way. (Letter no. 29, dated 16 Jumādā 1314 A.H.)

26. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* all your conditions are excellent. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with progress. Āmīn. (Letter no. 30, dated 1314 A.H.)

27. I was overjoyed at receiving your letter at the exact time of waiting for it. I am most pleased at hearing about your spiritual conditions and those of your associates. May you

progress by leaps and bounds. (Letter no. 31, dated 21 Jumādā 1314 A.H.)

28. [This note is addressed to]: Miyā Maulwī Sayyid Is-hāq ʿAlī Sāhib: As-salāmu ʿalaykum. You have done well. I now advise you that instead of consulting me, you must consult Maulānā Sāhib [Hadrat Wālā] and do as he says. (Letter no. 33, dated 12 Ramadān al-Mubārak 1314 A.H.)

29. I was most pleased to hear about your spiritual conditions. Inshā Allāh, you will progress spiritually day after day, and Allāh's creation will derive tremendous benefit from you. I have special thoughts about you all the time…As-salāmu ʿalaykum to Maulwī Is-hāq ʿAlī Sāhib. The books *Diyā' al-Qulūb* and *Irshād Murshid* are available there. You must study them and refer to Maulānā [Hadrat Wālā] if you encounter any difficulties. You must consider Maulānā Sāhib to be in my place and remain engrossed in the different forms of dhikr which he prescribes. (Letter no. 34, dated 6 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1314 A.H.)

30. I was very happy to receive your letter. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer you with His pleasure… I gave a green cloak to Shāh Bahā' ad-Dīn. He will hand it over directly to you. Accept it from me. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer you with more knowledge and virtue with which Allāh's creation benefits the most, and may He cause your written works to be of use and accepted. I think of you constantly. I am ready to depart and I hope I depart with a good end…You must use the cloak for yourself. (Letter no. 35, dated 26 Dhū al-Hijjah 1314 A.H.)

31. It is best that you returned to Thānah Bhawan. I hope a large number of people benefit internally and externally from you, and that you re-inhabit our madrasah and musjid. I always pray for you and think of you constantly. (Letter no. 36, dated 12 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1315 A.H.)

32. I pray for your success in steadfastness and reliance in Allāh *taʿālā*. May He bless you with internal and external progress. (Letter no. 37, dated 6 Rajab 1315 A.H.)

33. To the one of lofty ranks, the choice of the seekers, the selected one from among those who reached Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat al-ʿĀlim al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Qārī Shāh Muhammad Ashraf ʿAlī ath-Thānwī – may Allāh perpetuate his recognition and love. As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. I

received your letter which brought happiness to me and great joy to my heart. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with internal and external progress, and enable Allāh's creation to derive internal and external benefit from you. Āmīn. I pray all the time that a large number of Allāh's creation derives benefit from you and that your spiritual lineage continues. I was very happy to hear about the madrasah, musjid and rooms…These are my final days, I request you to pray for my good end. I have many books here. It would be good if you could come one more time. You will be able to meet me and at the same time, take all the books with you. If not, I will certainly send them with someone. (Letter no. 38, dated 16 Ramadān 1315 A.H.)

34. I was very happy to receive your letter. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable you to realize all your objectives in both worlds…There is no need for you mention to your love for me and thoughts about me; the heart finds a way to the heart of the other…I have admitted …into the spiritual family through Bayʿah ʿUthmānī. You must teach him the different forms of dhikr. You are sufficient. You have an open permission from me to show the different forms of dhikr to anyone who seek them… My thoughts are always directed towards you. (Letter no. 39, dated 11 Muharram 1316 A.H.)

35. May Allāh *taʿālā* include you among His devoted and sincere ones. (Letter no. 40, dated 12 Safar 1316 A.H.)

36. May Allāh *taʿālā* fulfil your wish. My heart is also extremely desirous of meeting you. (Letter no. 1, dated 4 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1312 A.H.)

37. This is an excellent spiritual condition. It is a station of gratitude. This is the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to include you among His devoted and sincere ones. (Letter no. 42, dated 17 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1316 A.H.)

38. I also received two copies of *Jazā' al-Aʿmāl*. I am very impressed by this book. I pray that Allāh *taʿālā* blesses you with internal and external progress. (Letter no. 43, dated 1 Jumādā ath-Thāniyah 1314 A.H.)

39. I received your letter. All praise is due to Allāh, the condition of your heart is excellent. This is the station of fear and hope. It is referred to as *haybat wa uns*. Sometimes one overpowers the other, but both should be considered to be the same. (Letter no. 44, dated 1 Rajab 1316 A.H.)

40. I received your second letter as well. I wrote the answer in your first letter. I repeat: Your spiritual condition is excellent. Inshā Allāh you will not be harmed. I am praying…when you experience anything in your heart, consider it to be from Allāh *taʿālā*. Those that are harmful will be repulsed by this meditation. (Letter no. 45, dated 19 Rajab 1316 A.H.)

41. Your spiritual condition is excellent. I mentioned this previously…Pitfalls of this nature are normally experienced by a seeker. Inshā Allāh you will pass them all. I am praying for you (surely He is all-hearing, most near). (Letter no. 46, dated 8 Shaʿbān 1316 A.H.)

42. Māshā Allāh your spiritual condition is excellent. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you in it. Whatever little reservation remains will also be removed. I am praying to Allāh *taʿālā* to include you among His devoted and sincere servants…Both your books were read to me; I was very impressed by them. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable you to complete them. (Letter no. 47, dated 22 Shawwāl 1316 A.H.)

43. I received your letter. All praise is due to Allāh your condition is excellent. (Letter no. 48, dated 14 Dhū al-H̲ijjah 1316 A.H.)

44. All praise is due to Allāh your condition is now excellent. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to bless you with progress. I had received a letter from Kānpūr with reference to your stay there and had replied to it. I now write to you and say that it is essential for you to remain permanently in Thānah Bhawan. If you have some time during the holidays or at any other time when you feel like going there, you may visit and see to the people there. As for the seekers, they must come to Thānah Bhawan – it is not so far from Kānpūr. I wrote the same thing in my letter to the people of Kānpūr. (Letter no. 49, dated 15 Muh̲arram 1317 A.H.)

45. I was very pleased to receive your letter…I am gone so weak that it is difficult for me to turn from one side to the other. My only wish now is for Allāh *taʿālā* to summon me quickly from this temporary abode. I pray for all our associates. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable you to realize your wishes. I do not have the strength to talk…You must personally teach each

person according to his condition. (Letter no. 50, dated 20 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1317 A.H.)

From the above quotations from *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah* the reader must have gauged the special relationship which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had with Hadrat Wālā. There is no need for further explanation. What must have his level of love for Hadrat Wālā been when, after reading about Hadrat Wālā's spiritual progress in a letter, he even perceived a physical improvement from his illness. This was learnt from letter no. 21. Other incidents portraying his special attention will be related later at appropriate places.

Appointing Hadrat Wālā As His Deputy

It is a strange coincidence that in his last letter – after which he passed away within two months – Hadrat Hājī Sāhib instructed him: "You must personally teach each person according to his condition. In this way, he appointed Hadrat Wālā as his special representative and deputy just before he could depart from this world.

A Most Special Glad Tiding

While on the subject of letters, I recall one other incident. After reading about Hadrat Wālā's spiritual conditions in one of his letters, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib addressed one of those who were present with him and gave a very special glad tiding with reference to Hadrat Wālā. This glad tiding sets him on a very high pedestal and confers a special distinction to him. However, Hadrat Wālā prohibited us from relating it to anyone as long as he is alive. In short, the attention and bounties which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib showered on him and the nature of the bounties which were showered on him were not showered on any of his attendants. This is because divine will had already decreed for Hadrat Wālā to sit in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah, be the true representative of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, and be the instrument for spreading his teachings in the East and West. Subsequently, this is exactly what happened.

A prelude to the above was Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's statement which he made to Hadrat Wālā when the latter was returning to India. This will be related separately later on. He said: "Yes, if for some reason you are fed up and you want to leave

Kānpūr, then it was my view that instead of going to any other place, you should rather go to Thānah Bhawan." When Hadrat Wālā eventually left Kānpūr and proceeded to Thānah Bhawan as per Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's advice, he wrote to Hadrat Wālā saying: "It is best that you returned to Thānah Bhawan. I hope a large number of people benefit internally and externally from you, and that you re-inhabit our madrasah and musjid. I always pray for you and think of you constantly." (Letter no. 36, dated 12 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1315 A.H.)

Similarly, he writes in Letter no. 38, dated 16 Ramadān 1315 A.H.: "Inshā Allāh, I pray all the time that a large number of Allāh's creation derives benefit from you and that your spiritual lineage continues. I was very happy to hear about the madrasah, musjid and rooms…"

All these statements can be encapsulated by the following couplet:

> The Qalandar (erudite shaykh) only speaks after witnessing personally.

The lofty spiritual conditions of Hadrat Wālā which are observed today by the world were clearly seen by Hadrat Hājī Sāhib a long time ago through his insightful knowledge. We could either refer to this as insight and foretelling or the results of his prayers and wishes. Alternatively, we could consider the latter [prayers and wishes] to be the basis and the former to be the results. The sum of both is the same.

عباراتنا شتى وحسنك واحد – وكل إلى ذاك الجمال يشير

Our ways of expression are different but your beauty is one and the same. All our expressions point to that beauty.

In short, the spiritual treasures which were to be placed in Hadrat Wālā's chest through the will and inspiration of Allāh *taʿālā* were all placed and handed over to him by Hadrat Hājī Sāhib during this short period of six months. He was given permission to accept bayʿah, appointed as his special representative and khalīfah, and assigned to the position of instruction and training.

The Mujaddid Assumes His Position

O Allāh! What a fortunate and blessed hour that was when a Qutb al-Irshād Hakīm al-Ummat Mujaddid Dīn wa Millat was

handed over the following responsibilities at the hands of a Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam:

1. Wiping out customs and innovations from the world of Islam and portraying it in its pristine form.

2. Removing Muslims from shortcomings and excesses and bringing them onto the straight path.

3. Causing rivers of knowledge and cognition to flow, and enabling all sections of the community to enjoy and derive benefit from these rivers.

4. Spreading internal and external blessings to the East and West.

5. Finding solutions to complex issues and solving difficult and intricate academic and practical rulings and injunctions.

6. Teaching Allāh's creation the correct etiquette of servitude and principles of social dealings, and turning Muslims into true Muslims and humans into true humans.

7. Displaying the beauty and constancy of Islamic education and culture to the world, shredding apart the covetous and deceptive veil of modern education and culture and exposing it, and visually displaying the concealed darkness of modernity.

8. Establishing the authority of people of Dīn in the hearts of worldly people, increasing the respect and dignity of Dīn, people of Dīn, knowledge of Dīn and the ʿulamā' of Dīn, and subduing those who were notorious for their arrogance and pride.

9. Proving the falsehood of modern doubts and objections on the very principles of logic and philosophy, and subduing celebrated claimants to logic and philosophy to submit before the injunctions, facts and beliefs of the Qur'ān and Hadīth.

10. Compiling *Iʿlā' as-Sunan* – a collection of Ahādīth in support of juridical rulings – and thereby increasing the honour and glory of jurisprudence.

11. Causing thousands of those who were negligent of salāh to become regular performers of salāh.

12. Convincing the devourers of interest to give up interest dealings, those earning unlawful income to give it up, and

influencing thousands of those immersed in internal and external sins to give them up by fulfilling the rights of those who have rights over them.

13. Treating chronic spiritual ailments through simple and accurate treatments, showing rare methods of rectification and unravelling intricate traps of the self.

14. Drawing attention to destructive dangers along the path and rescuing people from spiritual destruction.

15. Replacing the current cosmetic embellishments in Sufism with the original and time-honoured simplicity which has been coming down from generations.

16. Connecting the seekers with the pious predecessors and making them tread the long-abandoned path of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

17. Bringing a smile to the crying ones and tears to the laughing ones through themes of encouragement and warning. And especially by reciting verses of glad tidings and mercy, and rekindling the hopes of thousands of those who had fallen into despondency.

18. Conveying countless seekers which included individuals from every strata of society and of every occupation to the True Beloved through the shortest route.

19. In short, he was appointed to the position of instruction through which he rendered every necessary service to every department of Islam – especially tafsīr and Sufism – in the most beautiful and effective manner.

20. This was no ordinary feat. In fact, bearing in mind that it was to renew the Dīn of Muh̲ammad *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and refute all repugnant customs and evil ancient innovations, it was the most important of all important events. It deserves countless congratulations and applauds, and thousands of thanks and joys. The following couplet of H̲ad̲rat H̲āfiz̲ Shīrāzī *rah̲imahullāh* is applicable:

> The doe-eyed damsels of Paradise are dancing and handing out goblets out of thanks.

The following lines of H̲ad̲rat H̲āfiz̲ *rah̲imahullāh* are most applicable:

> The gentle morning breeze will spread the musk, and the old world will become new once again.

□

> The gentle morning breeze has come to give the good news to the old wine merchant that the season for singing, dancing, play, amusement and drinking has arrived.
>
> The breeze is here to revive the soul, the morning breeze is spreading the musk, the trees have become green and lush, and the birds are rejoicing.

Hadrat Wālā's various achievements and contributions were listed above so that his religious services may be viewed with a quick glance. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* this purpose has been achieved by the above list.

A Composition Written Out of Yearning

While thinking about Hadrat Wālā's religious achievements at this point, the yearning emotions of this insignificant author known as Majdhūb [Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb] have been so awakened that I produced an entire composition – and that too – in the Persian language whereas I never studied Persian before. I did not even study a basic primer such as *Āmad Nāmah* nor did I ever have an occasion to write Persian poetry. Since I am so alien to Persian, it was not possible for me to turn any attention to it. I myself am astounded at how I was able to compile these lines. What else can I conclude apart from the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* had willed me to write in praise of Hadrat Wālā, so He caused an incapable person like myself to be sufficiently capable to carry this out.

The background to compiling these lines is that while I was writing this chapter a person came to me and requested me to add a few lines which make mention of Hadrat Wālā to the Persian Spiritual Family Tree (Shajarah) of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *quddisah sirruhu*. In this way, the associates of Hadrat Wālā could read these lines when reading the entire Shajarah.

I declined this request by offering the excuse of not knowing Persian. But the person persisted so I thought about it superficially. This resulted in my becoming like a mad man in the sense that ideas after ideas began flowing like rivers to the

extent that I had to forcefully stop my pen when I reached 100 lines. It seemed as if the following lines of Hadrat Wālā's maternal uncle, Janāb Pīrjī Wājid ʿAlī Sāhib – a very articulate Persian poet – were applicable to the letter.

> What kind of enthusiasm it must have been that the pen is dancing in his hand! We merely jabbed him in the side, and the beloved is dancing.
>
> On seeing the pen, he is twisting, turning and flying like a mad man; and writing themes of praise.

The following lines of Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* seem to apply here:

> In these times, my soul clung to my garment because it found the fragrance of the long shirt of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*.
>
> Now that I have mentioned his name, it becomes necessary to explain something about his gift.

Bearing in mind that my composition is appropriate to this section and based on it, I feel I should include it here after listing Hadrat Wālā's achievements and contributions. I hope that instead of the reader considering it to be lengthy and boring, he will consider it most appropriate. In fact – inshā Allāh – he will find it most enjoyable. This composition is divided into two: The first contains prayers and is titled, *Prayers of the Seekers in the Court of Allāh*. The second composition contains praises and is titled, *Calling on the Seekers to Return to the Truthful*. The two together are titled, *The Cry of Majdhūb*. There is a link between the two compositions, as will be ascertained. I felt it disrespectful to remove the first composition. Moreover, these prayers are beneficial and enjoyable, especially for the seekers and those treading the path. The entire composition is therefore presented to the reader.

The Cry of Majdhūb

Prayers of the Seekers in the Court of Allāh

> O Allāh! Have mercy on my terrible condition. Help me because the matter is not within my control.
>
> I fear my self and Satan with regard to my Dīn and īmān in every moment of my life.

Safeguard my heart through Your affectionate gaze so that it does not deviate from the straight path.

Apprise my heart with Your mysteries so that it does not go astray when treading the path of love.

Through Hadrat Shāh Ashraf ʿAlī who is Your noblest, loftiest and most high-ranking servant; remove pride and self-conceit from within me, and confer this despicable self with nobility.

Turn my self into a self which has acquired tranquillity, and save it from the whisperings of man and jinn.

Remove love for all apart from You from my heart. Make me totally unaware of the world by keeping me engrossed in Your remembrance.

Fill my heart with Your love in such a manner that I do not even consider a hundred kingdoms of Jamshed[1] to be of any worth.

Thousands of young and old have reached You. Thousands others have the honour of presenting themselves at Your door.

Confer an insignificant person like me the honour of presenting myself before You. Bestow peace to a restless person like me as well.

Show me the way. There are a hundred obstacles before me. There are veils within veils before me.

Pull me – who is fallen in these veils – out and make me Your lover and Your beloved.

O Allāh! Bless me with steadfastness. Bestow Your bounties on me. Bestow Your bounties on me. Bestow Your bounties on me.

Turn my life into a pure life, and make my death a pure death.

Keep me occupied with You as long as I am alive and give me salvation when I die.

---

[1] An ancient king of Persia.

Let my final moments in this world be good, and give me a place beneath the feet of Hadrat Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the eternal Paradise.

Calling on The Seekers to Return to The Truthful

O you who are praying! Do not confine yourself to praying. Pray and search for a guide as well.

When you are on this path, it is essential to have a guide who will convey you to your destination. It is a waste of time and energy to endeavour on your own.

However, there are very few guides in this world. There are many robbers in the guise of guides.

If you want to find the truth, do not seek it from every Tom, Dick and Harry.

Acquire the truth from Hadrat Ashraf ʿAlī because he is Allāh's proof for the people of the world.

His efforts have revived the Dīn. He is a true representative of the pious predecessors.

He was given the name of Ashraf from the unseen world. This is why he is certainly Ashraf – the noblest - in his time.

He is a sign and guide on the path of the Sharīʿah. He is an imām and leader for those treading the Tarīqah.

He is unparalleled in his external and internal knowledge. He is the super-specialist physician of the Muslim community and the Qutb of the time.

He is the treatment for the pains of the heart, and a cure for spiritual ailments.

He is better than every reformer of his time because he is a surgeon and also has the dressings for the wound.

When he becomes angry in order to teach manners, a hundred mercies are sacrificed for his one anger.

Externally he is an embodiment of Allāh's wrath and might. Internally he is an embodiment of His beauty.

His wrathful gaze is filled with love which creates love in other hearts.

His intoxicated gaze is like that of a stranger, but in essence, it bears concern for everyone.

His single cry of pain creates concern in a thousand hearts, and his one gaze intoxicates thousands.

When he lowers his gaze, he burns the world. When he smiles, he spreads gratitude.

There may be a smile on his lips, but his heart is crying. He does one thing externally, and something else internally.

What can I say about the condition of that well-wisher who is a unique combination of hope and fear?

A servant's condition is unique before him: there is crying in his laughter, and laughter in his crying.

His speech results in the rectification of thousands of people. His silence has a thousand meanings.

When he stands up to deliver a lecture, he scatters a great many pearls and flowers.

O you nightingale who reveals secrets! May your beak never be devoid of thanks.

Your heart has become the Mt. Ṯūr by the light of the truth which is in it. Your existence is an embodiment of light.

His face is a reflection of the beauty of the beloved which ignites the love for the True Beloved in the hearts.

Your head holds the intelligence of great minds, and your chest enfolds a mad heart [which is mad in Allāh's love].

A goblet by your side and a rosary in your hand. Rarely could anyone have seen an ascetic like this.

Your tongue is occupied in Allāh's remembrance, and your heart is also happy in His remembrance.

What an excellent time and what a lovely occasion when the goblet is on the lips and the beloved is at one's side!

The intoxication of this drink is most unique in the sense that you are a youth in your exact time of old age.

He has an exceptional expertise in winning over the heart. You are a very old and experienced heart-ravisher.

O Khwājah! Look at the rank of our Ashraf. Come to the Khānqāh of our Ashraf.

If you want to see him, you will have to come here. You will see poverty in royal garments.

This is a strange work of the Real Doer: the proud and the humble are gathered in the same place.

Sometimes you are sitting on a high pedestal, and sometimes [you are so low] that we cannot even see your heels.

In addition to possessing a regal appearance, you command a hundred times more awes than the kings.

You neither have a kingdom, throne nor crown. But you have a royal temperament.

Every person of the heart, prattler and audacious one is lost in your presence – like a cat which disappears in the presence of a lion.

No one has the courage to say anything in your presence. It is as though they have lost their tongues.

There is no need for anyone to express his conditions before you because all knots are untied [all problems solved] without having to say anything.

There is no room for speaking and conversations here. This assembly is solely an assembly of viewing your illuminated face.

Listen attentively to what I am saying: Do not utter a word here. When you are in his presence, you must lock your tongue.

When you are in his presence, make a path to his heart with your heart and join your heart to his.

The heart which attaches itself to his heart becomes a garden even if it was a thorn.

Lose yourself in his heart, and you will observe majestic things there.

His body is with everyone else on earth, but his heart is present in Allāh's court – in His Throne.

This Khānqāh is a place of amazing joy. This Khānqāh is a place of unique purity.

If Paradise is to be found on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.

The cup bearer is one, and the drinkers are in the thousands. All are busy looking at his two intoxicated eyes.

The tavern is in a flourishing state. Every drinker is in ecstasy and intoxication.

O Allāh! How excellent these drinkers of love are! How lovely this drunkenness and greatness of Allāh!

Do not ask about those who are engaged in Allāh's remembrance in the middle of the night. They are occupied with their hearts and tongues.

What are you asking about the joy of remembrance at predawn!? It is better than morsels of chicken and fish.

Every room is reverberating with dhikr even though it may be very small and constricted. The dhikr is so much better than the sound of drums and fiddles.

Over here, the heart repeats Allāh's name because it hears His name repeated all the time.

Look at how healthy the air is over here. The heart is cured without any medication.

O you who are searching for Allāh! Where are you? O you who want to be cured! Where are you?

O you seekers! Come, come! O you whose hearts are burnt! Come here!

By Allāh's grace, what a high court this is! Every pauper is a king in this place.

No one brings gold and silver here. In fact, no one has contact with anyone.

That place is a Paradise where there is no discomfort. No person has anything to do with another.

Come! Cast aside your pride and evil. What can I tell you about the majesties which ought to be observed here!

My tongue cannot express your blessings because the ship is in a shore-less ocean.

What I do know is that what you heard must be seen with your eyes. Hearsay can never equal an eye-witness account.

I am not saying anything but the truth because this is a matter which concerns Dīn. Believe what I am saying because my eyes have seen all this.

Majdhūb is not conveying something which he heard. When a Qalandar says something, he says it after having seen it.

Hadrat Ashraf ʿAlī is from among the special servants of Allāh. He is a walī. He is a walī. He is a walī.

His words, actions and spiritual conditions are witnesses to his beauty and perfection.

It is fruitless to have any doubts because the people of the hearts are not affected by those who have evil thoughts about them.

You are an imām for every intelligent and religious person. It is most incorrect to be opposed to you.

Every objector believes in his heart that you are right. He may speak out against you verbally, but his heart attests to your genuineness.

What benefit is there in enemies hating him? It is to their loss. It is to their loss. It is to their loss.

We should not try to fight lions because it is synonymous to breaking our own hands.

The one who fights a walī of Allāh has in fact stood up to wage war against Allāh.

He has no fear whatsoever for enemies because they are despicable. Of what value are the tiny particles of dust before the sun?

The comprehensiveness of your light is absolutely clear. But it is concealed to those who are blind of sight.

Your internal pain has come out in such a way that your breaths have ignited fires in the entire world.

Because of you, there are sparks of light in thousands of others. Countless candles are lit by a single lamp.

May your heart remain forever alive with love. May its blessings remain forever in the world.

Even if I may be mad in my love for him, so what! The entire world loves him.

Two Words Of Advice From His Shaykh At The Time Of Departure

I now return to the original subject. When Hadrat Wālā completed his spiritual training and was about to leave the service of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, the latter gave him two specific words of advice. (1) "Look here, Miyā Ashraf 'Alī! On reaching India, you will be faced with a particular condition. You must not be hasty." (2) "If you become fed up with Kānpūr for whatever reason, do not attach yourself to any other place. You must proceed to Thānah Bhawan." In his letter dated Muharram 1308 A.H. he had stopped Hadrat Wālā from leaving Kānpūr because that was a period of training. But now that he acquired firmness, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib is himself giving him an indication of leaving Kānpūr.

Hadrat Wālā Returns To India

After being dyed in the Chishtī Sābrī Imdādī dye – which was the dye of Allāh *taʿālā* and His proof at the time – taking on its colours in totality and perfection, traversing all the stations and levels of this unique path, and imbibing all spiritual qualities and perfections, Hadrat Wālā returned to India. He returned as the Hakīm al-Ummat (specialist physician of the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*) and became engrossed in curing the community of its spiritual maladies and enriching it with spiritual treasures.

The Light Of Cognition Rises In India

Just recently, Hājī Muhammad Bashīr Sāhib Lucknowī related something in an assembly of Hadrat Wālā. Janāb Bakhshī Nadhīr Hasan Sāhib Marhūm Kānpūrī who was a righteous and religious man, related a dream to him. He had seen this dream during that period of time when Hadrat Wālā had completed his six-month stay in Makkah Muʿazzamah in the service of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and was returning to India. News of his departure had reached Kānpūr. Hājī Muhammad Bashīr Sāhib said: "I remember the gist of the dream to this day. Bakhshī Sāhib saw Hadrat Wālā leaving Makkah Muʿazzamah and arriving in India. The moment he disembarked from the ship, a light spread throughout India, and the darkness which was experienced in the dream was dispersed at once."

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the interpretation of this good dream is more obvious than the light of day. Let alone any room for rejection, there can be no room for any hesitation in this regard. But he must have been astounded at the time when he saw the dream. Hadrat Wālā was already accepted as a disperser of darkness and spreader of Islamic sciences for Kānpūr itself. But who could have ever imagined such all-embracing and universal blessings!?

Return To Kānpūr

After imbibing the blessings and teachings of his shaykh in totality and to perfection, Hadrat Wālā returned to Kānpūr as a fountain of blessings and a source of good. He then immersed himself in conveying internal and external blessings to the people. The people of Kānpūr who where his loyalists were busy making elaborate arrangements for his welcome after

such a long period of separation. Hadrat Wālā already had a strong feeling that this is what they would do. But because he had completely obliterated his self and was embellished with absolute servitude after having spent time in the service of his shaykh, he went to great pains in concealing his arrival to the extent that not a single person could reach the station to receive him. Hadrat Wālā suddenly appeared in the Madrasah without anyone having prior knowledge of it. Those who had been waiting anxiously for him were both astounded and remorseful because no one had even heard of his arrival, and all the preparations and arrangements for welcoming him had to be cast aside.

Crowds Of Friends Come To Visit Him

No sooner Hadrat Wālā reached the Madrasah, news of his arrival spread like wild fire throughout the city. People who were eager to meet him began arriving in groups after groups. This resulted in a constant coming and going of guests which did not seem as if it would end. When the people informed Hadrat Wālā of their preparations for welcoming him, he said: "This is why I came away without informing you'll before hand."

The people thought that since Hadrat Wālā's family was with, he must have been inconvenienced at the station. But he related to them that he experienced no inconvenience whatsoever. "Allāh *taʿālā* had been most kind to us. We found a small conveyance on the platform itself. I seated the family on it, loaded the goods onto a porter and came out of the station. I then took a conveyance and came here to the Madrasah. I was not troubled in any way, and many Muslims were saved from inconvenience. After all, formalities always cause inconveniences and difficulties. Formalities can never compare with the ease which simplicity provides."

Hadrat Wālā Returns A Changed Person

On returning from Makkah Muʿazzamah, Hadrat Wālā occupied himself once again in teaching, lecturing and propagating. In addition to this, he also initiated a programme of spiritual instruction and training. Those who observed him now were astounded to see the changes in him. He was completely different from before.

I clearly recall a very old statement of my deceased father. He used to say: "I witnessed that era in Maulānā's [Hadrat Wālā's] life when he was very red and fair, always cheerful, handsome, with glittering parted hair, and well-dressed. He looked like a perpetual groom in the prime of his youth. Then I observed the time when he returned after having spent time with Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. His face had turned yellow, withered, gloomy and dishevelled. He neither bothered about applying oil to his hair nor did he worry about combing it. He did not wear a long coat, and no clothing with laces and embroidery. He would only wear a plain kurtah and a pants. Hadrat Wālā relates: "My senior wife was very particular about making me wear formal clothes because she had a lot of interest in embroidery in those days."

In short, Hadrat Wālā's internal lushness and opulence had caused him to disregard his external appearance totally. However, a thousand external appearances could be sacrificed for that pauper-like state. In fact, he had more attraction than before.

Changes In The Madrasah, Teachers And Students

Some time after returning from the service of his shaykh, Hadrat Wālā once again experienced intense yearning for Allāh *taʿālā* and his previous spiritual condition returned to him. But its nature had changed. The yearning which he had experienced previously was mixed with restlessness while the present one was mixed with enthusiasm. There was worry and concern in the previous condition, but now there was joy. There was discomfort previously, now there was enjoyment. Previously it had a tinge of dissatisfaction, now it was pleasing. Previously he was moving towards Allāh *taʿālā*, now he was immersed in Allāh *taʿālā*. Previously it entailed striving and exertion, while now the objective of circuiting the Kaʿbah was achieved. The previous spiritual condition stemmed from the absence of having connected with Allāh *taʿālā*. Now it stemmed from having connected with Him. That was a time of questing, now was the time of having reached. That was a time of separation, this was a time of getting together. That was a time of regret, this was a time of yearning. That was a state preceding witnessing, this was a time subsequent to it. That was the effect of love, this was the effect of beauty. The following lines of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* apply here:

> A nightingale picked up a beautiful petal in its beak and was crying out in its beautiful voice while the petal was in its beak. I asked: “What is the reason for crying out when you have obtained your objective?” It replied: “The display of the beloved has caused me to devote myself to this task.”

In short, the present restlessness when compared to the previous one was one of extreme joy because it stemmed from intense affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. It was as though it was made up of yearning and affinity together. Instead of the effects of restlessness being manifest, the effects of yearning were prominent. Consequently, the very nature of the Madrasah changed. The normal text books were being taught, but when any lesson had the slightest resemblance to Sufism, lengthy and detailed discussions on Sufism followed, and the students were overcome by spiritual ecstasy. Many of the teachers and students began dhikr and other spiritual exercises, and began experiencing unique conditions and amazing states.

Due to his enthusiasm in the beginning, Hadrat Wālā initiated a circle of attention (where people sit in a circle and contemplate and reflect). The Madrasah was now transformed into a khānqāh. Hadrat Wālā describes the level and extent of zeal and fervour of those days: “It was my heartfelt desire to make all the people of the world into those who are immersed in Allāh’s remembrance, and to turn all of them into His true friends.”

Enthusiasm And Zeal Of The Early Days

I met some of those who had witnessed the nature of the Madrasah of those days and also those who had attended the circle of attention. For example, Janāb Shāh Lutf Rasūl Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was a very powerful and distinguished khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā. On several occasions I saw him overcome by an intense spiritual condition by merely speaking about something or when a certain poem was quoted before him. His hands and feet used to become cold, he would scream out uncontrollably, and tremble like a slaughtered animal. On one occasion, I requested him to accompany me to Mansūrī[1] together with a few other friends. This journey entailed a lot of

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[1] The name of a mountainous hill-station in India.

climbing, and because he was very thin and fretful by nature, he was extremely fatigued. When he was in the midst of his tiredness at a very steep point, exceptionally distressed and complaining to me, I quoted the following couplet to him:

> This complaint of disloyalty and cry of perversity is the punishment for attaching your heart. It is the joy of friendship.

The moment he heard this, he forgot all about his tiredness and fatigue. He went into a fervour, screamed and began dancing in ecstasy.

He used to be overcome by fear [of Allāh] most of the time. In most cases, when stories and incidents about forgiveness were discussed, he would go into a state of spiritual ecstasy. On several occasions he was noticed going to Hadrat Wālā without bothering whether it was the appropriate time or not, and speaking to him about matters relating to being overcome by ecstasy. Hadrat Wālā says: "I have not come across anyone else who was so overcome by fear." When he used to speak while overcome by ecstasy, it seemed as if his heart was being torn apart at that very moment.

My teacher, Janāb Maulānā Sirāj Ahmad Sāhib Amrauhī, who is also a khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā related to me that on one occasion when Hadrat Wālā was not present [in Thānah Bhawan], Shāh Lutf Rasūl Sāhib was overcome by an intense spiritual condition while in salāh. In his salāh he was involuntarily saying "Allāh Allāh", sometimes taking a few steps in front of the row and sometimes behind. The same condition persisted when Hadrat Wālā returned from his journey. Hadrat Wālā read something on some water and gave it to him to drink. Only then did he settle down. Hadrat Wālā warned another person who was very desirous of experiencing spiritual conditions by asking him: "What, do you also want to have experiences like him?" He replied: "No Hadrat, this is a very difficult condition, I cannot handle it."

Despite these spiritual conditions which are experienced by him to this day, Shāh Lutf Rasūl Sāhib clearly recalls and recounts Hadrat Wālā's days of fervour and zeal in Kānpūr; and still desires to see them today. Hadrat Wālā consoles him by saying: "Those previous conditions were from the self. The

present conditions are from the soul. The former cannot compare with the latter."

An Example Of The Attention Of The Early Days

The effects of the attention of the early days were like a heavy downpour which caused a flood of water to just flow away – it left behind no clouds, no water, and the ground remained as dry as it had been. As for his present day spiritual conditions, they are like a continuous fine rain. Although the latter seems to be nothing compared to the heavy downpour, it is completely absorbed by the ground. It does not just flow away like the heavy downpour which has no effect on the ground. A piece of ground becomes suitable for agriculture after it receives a fine continuous rain.

After hearing about Hadrat Wālā's early days of zeal and fervour from Shāh Lutf Rasūl Sāhib, I asked Hadrat Wālā: "Hadrat, do you think of those conditions of the early days?" He replied: "If a husband were to remove the glittering silver jewellery from his wife and adorn her with pure gold jewellery from head to toe, would she ever think about the silver jewellery? Or will she, instead, thank her husband for removing the cheap silver jewellery and adorning her with expensive gold jewellery?"

A Strange Condition Experienced By A Student

In short, the period after spending time with Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was one of intense zeal and fervour, resulting in students and teachers becoming engrossed in the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. A student began emulating Hadrat Wālā and immersed himself in dhikr without consulting him. One day, while studying *Bustān* under a certain Maulānā, he was overcome by intense ecstasy when he read the following lines:

> Someone said to Majnūn: "O you of good habits! What has happened to you that you never came back to drink with us? You probably do not love Laylā anymore. Your attention is diverted to someone else and you are not inclined to her any longer."
>
> When the poor fellow heard this, he began crying loudly and profusely, and said: "O sir! Remove my hand from my side. My heart is already in pain, do

> not make it worse by rubbing salt into the wound. Separation is not a proof of patience. Separation is very often necessary."

He experienced such an intense condition that he rushed out while saying *Lā ilāha illallāh* and ran towards the market place. Anyone whom he met along the way, he would instruct him to say *Lā ilāha illallāh*. His effect was so strong that the person would be forced to say *Lā ilāha illallāh*. He said this to many Hindus and even Hindu constables, and they too said it. The boy's uncle who was also studying there was quite distressed. Hadrat Wālā said: "There is no reason to be distressed, you ought to be happy that your nephew has become a walī." When his nephew was trembling and palpitating, he tried to subdue him by pressing him down. Hadrat Wālā stopped him saying: "Do not do that. Let him continue. If you press him down you might throttle him and kill him." He added: "The pain is already in his heart. Now do not allow him to injure himself physically. Do not allow him to fall, but at the same time, do not hold him."

When he ran towards the market place, his uncle and others also ran behind him. They caught him after much difficulty and brought him back. The time for 'asr salāh was coming to an end by the time they returned to the Madrasah. Hadrat Wālā said: "Although he is not accountable at present, it will be better if he is made to perform the salāh." He was told to perform his salāh but he merely continued repeating the words *Lā ilāha illallāh*.

One of the etiquette of ecstasy is that those who are present near the person who is experiencing it must also be in line with him and agree with him. One of Hadrat Wālā's students, Maulwī Muhammad Yūnus Sāhib, therefore resorted to this plan: He said to him: "Perform the wudū' of *Lā ilāha illallāh*." He carried out the instruction immediately and performed wudū'. He said to him: "Perform the salāh of *Lā ilāha illallāh*." He stood up to perform the salāh but performed it in a strange way. Instead of saying *Allāhu Akbar*, he said: "Āh, āh." Instead of reciting the Qur'ān, he began reading love poems. He quoted many poems although he was never heard quoting poems previously. He also performed many extra prostrations in this salāh.

The Student Is Treated

The above condition remained throughout the night and a need was now felt to remove him from that condition. The next day, Hadrat Wālā sent him to a dervish by the name of Miyā Khākī Shāh who lived in Kānpūr and whose experience in removing such conditions was known to Hadrat Wālā. Miyā Khākī Shāh said jokingly: "You were the one who shot the bullet and now you are sending him to me to remove it!?" He then focussed his attention on the student for some time and asked him to return the next day. But the student dreamt of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that night who said to him: "You must say to the fakir: 'How can you be so wretched so as to try to remove this bounty?" When this dream was related to Hadrat Wālā, he did not allow the student to go to the dervish.

Another idea which came to mind was that the student's zeal and fervour would be calmed through samāʿ. Hadrat Wālā spoke to a Sufi who practised samāʿ and said to him: "Although it is against my approach, take him to your place and let him listen to some samāʿ." Hadrat Wālā did not know that this Sufi also used musical instruments. He acceded to this request very happily because he now had the opportunity of boasting that the Maulānās also need him. The Sufi took the student to his group, but when they sat down with the musical instruments, the student became very angry and said: "What are all these baseless things? You want to immerse me in sin?! I will break all these instruments." Saying this, he fled from there. Hadrat Wālā then asked a Bengali student who had a good pain-filled voice to take the student to a quiet place and quote poetry to him. Hadrat Wālā did not permit anyone else to go near. He quoted the following panegyric of Hadrat Khusro *rahimahullāh* to him:

> For how long will the heart burn from your separation? For how long will my life be spoilt out of questing for you?
>
> O Khusro! Look at the book of his face. For how long are you going to continue studying panegyrics and books?

The student went into a fit when he heard the above couplets, got up in a frenzy and went on repeating the words "for how long, for how long?" in such a loud voice that even Hadrat Wālā

heard him. Once his heart gave vent to his rage, he settled down quite well. This procedure proved quite beneficial. The student had also dreamt of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* instructing him to pledge bayʿah. When he asked: "To whom should I pledge?" He received the reply: "To the one in whom you have faith and confidence." He said: "I have faith and confidence in you." Saying this, he requested Hadrat Wālā to accept his bayʿah. Hadrat Wālā accepted without hesitation because he considered it to be an instruction from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "People did not understand what these conditions were all about. Whereas the zeal and fervour remained for just four days and then everything returned to normal. He is living to this day but totally blank. It was merely a transitory enjoyment."

The Effects Of Attention

Janāb Shāh Lutf Rasūl Sāhib who was mentioned previously began experiencing many expositions in Hadrat Wālā's circle of attention. Hadrat Wālā felt a desire to focus his attention on his senior wife. This affected her so much that she began having cramps in her hands and feet. Hadrat Wālā himself got frightened and quickly moved his attention away. He read something, blew on water and gave it to her to drink. Only then did she recover.

A Different Type Of Yearning

In short, after Hadrat Wālā's return from Makkah Muʿazzamah, he was on a spiritual high in which he immersed himself in dhikr, spiritual exercises and experienced many spiritual conditions and states. This is also gauged from letter no. 17 of *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah* dated 8 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1313 A.H. in which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib writes: "Peace be to you, my heart is with you. All praise is due to Allāh, I am well and pray to Allāh daily for your wellbeing. I was most pleased to receive your letter…May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you forever overflowing and intoxicated in His remembrance, yearning for Him and various spiritual ecstasies."

But once he got firmness in the acquired stations, the enthusiasm took on a different hue and he now experienced an

intense yearning for the expected stations. The following couplets apply to his situation:

> There is no benefit in quenching my thirst from this water of immortality. May Allāh increase the number of thirsty ones in every era.
>
> Traversing the path of love is a never ending journey because this path goes on increasing on its own. This is similar to a branch which continues growing with thorns.
>
> The ocean of love has no shores. When you are in such an ocean, you have no alternative but to hand over your life.

The trembling and palpitating condition which Hadrat Wālā had been experiencing before his stay in Makkah Muʿazzamah returned once again. But there was a world of difference between the two. The first stemmed from a primary quest, while the latter from a quest for more. Changes of this nature are essential experiences in the path of Sufism. Although river water settles down once it reaches the ocean, it also has to experience the high tide, low tide and thrashing of the waves – all of which are more powerful and more intense than before. To explain it in another way, when a person reaches a high mountain peak, he still has to encounter deep valleys. After entering the borders of royal territory, a person has to pass through lengthy and narrow canals and channels to reach certain special palaces.

Hadrat Wālā Is Overcome By Worry

As per the foretelling of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, Allāh *taʿālā* had willed the elevation in ranks of Hadrat Wālā. Thus, his spiritual condition took another turn and his quest intensified much more than before. As the saying goes, every ending marks a return to the beginning, Hadrat Wālā experienced the same confusion and worry that was experienced before his stay in Makkah Muʿazzamah. In fact, this thirst was far more intense than before because he had already tasted it previously. Although this worry was extremely enjoyable, he perceived an immediate need for someone to steer him. His gaze naturally fell on the same person who had provided him with some sort of relief during the beginning stages of his spiritual journey, viz. his affectionate maternal uncle, Pīrjī Imdād ʿAlī Sāhib.

Hadrat Wālā had been informing him periodically of his spiritual conditions. He also made it a point of reverting to him at this stage. But how could the heart which had now been illuminated by the light of the Sunnah and dyed with the Imdādullāh colour accept any other colour!? How could the noble and fine temperament of the one who was to become the reviver of the Sunnah, obliterator of innovations and the Mujaddid of the Muslim community not reject any such thing which had the slightest tinge of conflict with the Sunnah? Even if the person who was giving it was excused due to his condition? Consequently, Pīrjī Sāhib's intense focus, various plans and his special spiritual engrossment were of no avail. They only served to increase Hadrat Wālā's restlessness and intense thirst.

Lectures Are Suspended

Although Hadrat Wālā did experience some recovery from the above measures, it was not a genuine recovery. As per the words of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib it was merely an "assumed and borrowed recovery". It was not a longstanding recovery. This comes out quite clearly from Letter no. 23 of *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah* and will be quoted later on. According to Hadrat Wālā, the fundamental reason for this restlessness was: "An extreme hastiness in wanting to acquire my objective and an intense desire to experience involuntary spiritual conditions and states." This excessive enthusiasm increased to the extent that the following couplet applied to him:

> So that you may know that when Allāh *taʿālā* draws a person to Himself, he becomes useless to all worldly activities.

His heart shunned all other occupations. His interest in teaching no longer remained, nor did he have any desire for external and internal instruction. Anyway, he had to force himself to pay attention to his teaching because he was an employee and it was therefore obligatory on him to carry out his duties. As for his other activities such as delivering talks, lectures, internal and external instruction, etc. he suspended them completely. After all, he was so worried about his own self, where did he have the time to worry about others? The time that was left over after teaching was spent in meditating about the True Beloved. In short, he suspended all unnecessary relations and turned to solitude. He even gave up

delivering public lectures which the people of Kānpūr thoroughly used to enjoy from the very beginning of his stay in that city.

The People Of Kānpūr Are Worried

No sooner Hadrat Wālā suspended his public lectures, all the Muslims of Kānpūr were panic-stricken. The thirsty ones for the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat Wālā became restless like fish out of water. They began applying various types of pressure on him to deliver lectures. Janāb ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Khān Sāhib, the founder of Madrasah Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm and an elderly pious man, personally came to Hadrat Wālā and quoted the following couplet out of worry and love:

> The course of beauty has been covered. Now give me zakāh because I am a poor and needy man.

Hadrat Wālā replied in a very painful tone: "Hadrat! I myself am becoming poor, what can I give to others?"

How can a person who considers himself to be so bankrupt and is so overcome by servitude ever be able to deliver a lecture which, in a way, is a sort of high status and a claim?

The Ulamā Request Hadrat Wālā To Deliver A Lecture

The Madrasah was hosting a jalsah during the same period. All the committee members of the Madrasah felt an intense need for Hadrat Wālā to address the audience. Outside ʿulamā' had arrived in order to attend the jalsah. The committee members took them with and proceeded to Hadrat Wālā. They used these ʿulamā' as intermediaries and insisted that he deliver a speech. Hadrat Wālā's sound heart has so much of respect and reverence for ʿulamā' that he shows full consideration to even the young ones among them. But here they brought senior ʿulamā' as intermediaries. Hadrat Wālā was now in a tight spot because he could neither refuse nor agree. When he had no alternative, he lowered his head and began crying. When Maulānā Zuhūr al-Islām Sāhib Fatahpūrī *rahimahullāh* saw the scene before him, his heart melted and he quoted the following couplet spontaneously:

> Love has rendered us totally useless. If it were not for that, we too were people who could do some work.

The Maulānā addressed his companions: "Enough brothers, enough. Do not tell him anything. Leave him to himself, do not impose on him." Maulānā Shāh Sulaymān Sāhib Phulwārī had also arrived in the city. People went to him and persisted that he influences Hadrat Wālā to deliver a speech. He gave a unique reply: "If you are going to force a person who is in such a state to deliver a speech, then when he sits on the pulpit, the first words which will issue from his mouth will be: 'I am the truth.'[1] In such a situation, it is totally wrong to insist on him."

The Reason For Stopping Lectures

Hadrat Wālā relates: "During those days, I was overcome by a severe need for solitude. This is why I gave up delivering lectures. I feared I might make incorrect statements causing misunderstanding to the masses and harm to their Dīn. There was only one person to whom I used to relate in privacy the themes of tauhīd which used to enter my heart. He was Maulānā Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib Bardawānī (who was a wise and sagacious scholar and a most trustworthy student). At the time, he was more of an academic and was not overly influenced by Sufism. Despite this, he was very much affected by what I used to say to him, tears would flow involuntarily from his eyes, and he felt compelled to agree with whatever I said to him."

Glory to Allāh! Look at Hadrat Wālā's concern for the wellbeing of the masses even during these spiritual conditions which he was experiencing. In the presence of such conditions, he decided to give up lecturing completely.

The Wisdom Behind Hadrat Wālā's Worry

There is another important incident related to the above condition. Hadrat Wālā relates it quite often. Since it clarifies and explains the above condition, I consider it appropriate to relate it here. Hadrat Wālā himself explains it in detail towards the end of his lecture titled *Shukr al-Mathnawī*. Pages 22 and 23 of this lecture are quoted verbatim here.

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[1] He is making reference to a statement made by a senior Sufi of the past, and for which he was criticized because only Allāh *taʿālā* is the truth.

There is some wisdom behind Allāh *taʿālā* withholding a certain bounty. When I was overzealous in the beginning, a thought came to my mind that I have a quest and it is an accepted fact that Allāh *taʿālā* is aware of our condition. It is also an accepted fact that He is all-powerful, and most affectionate and all merciful at the same time. Why, then, is there a delay? I could not understand this. When my worry increased considerably, I felt I should consult Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*, so I opened the *Mathnawī* with this in mind. On the very first page which I opened, these four couplets appeared which contained four preludes which I had laid down. There was a fifth one which was not in my mind. In the absence of the fifth one, I could not come to an answer. The fifth one was that Allāh *taʿālā* is all-wise and there is some wisdom in the delay. The couplets are as follows:

> Your pain was searching for a path to Me. Just yesterday I was listening to your cries.
>
> I have the power to show you the path without having to make you wait like this, and to enable you to traverse the path.
>
> So that you could free yourself from the present storms and place your feet on the treasures of reaching Me.
>
> However, the joys and sweetness of one's house [destination] are in accordance with the pains of the journey.
>
> You will only derive benefits from your sons when you bear the hardships and afflictions of the journey.

The essence of the above lines are: I accept that your pain of love is searching for ways to reach Me (my first prelude is accepted here). I was also listening to your painful cries last night (my second prelude is acknowledged here). I have the power to guide you towards reaching Me, and to provide the path to you so that you are saved from the upheavals of time and you reach me safely. (My third prelude is explicitly accepted, and the fourth implicitly). However, this delay has been caused because the rule is that the more the difficulties along the way, the more enjoyable one's house becomes on reaching it. The full enjoyment of meeting your family, children

and close relatives can only be acquired when you have to suffer many difficulties and hardships on your journey. This theme demonstrates a fifth prelude. After accepting all my other preludes, an answer is provided to a doubt about the fifth prelude. The essence of it is: We are all-wise and whatever We do is based on absolute wisdom. The wisdom behind this delay and pause is that once you eventually reach Us, you will appreciate it.

Overwhelming Servitude

During the period when this condition was quite intense, Hadrat Wālā went home on the occasion of ʿīd. As was the practice of the local residents, after the ʿīd salāh they proceeded to the grave of Shāh Wilāyat Sāhib. In the presence of everyone there, a person scolded Hadrat Wālā by saying: "You should not have reverted to your uncle, Pīrjī Imdād ʿAlī Sāhib. You acted against what your academic position requires of you because Pīrjī Sāhib's condition does not conform with the Sharīʿah." Instead of responding to this objection and engaging the person in an argument, Hadrat Wālā fell at his feet in the presence of all and, in order to avoid any argument, acknowledged his mistake and said: "Yes sir. I have indeed committed a grave error. Pardon me for Allāh's sake and do not discuss this issue. Let it pass. I myself accept that I am far worse than what you think of me." This incident clearly indicates Hadrat Wālā's overwhelming humility, and a dislike and aversion for arguments.

The Effects Of Zealousness

Hadrat Wālā had a house built in Thānah Bhawan during this same period. Since he was in a serious state of abstention, he named the building "Khānah Āzād". But Pīrjī Sāhib stopped him from giving it this name because it gives off a sense of aggrandizement and advertising.

All the above incidents bring us to the simple conclusion that Hadrat Wālā was experiencing a very forceful and strong spiritual condition at the time. At this point, I recall a very emotional poem which Hadrat Wālā had composed during the same period. I am quoting it here because it is a reflection of his internal condition and yearning quest.

> The thing which is acquired in this path is astonishing. It is astonishing. It is astonishing.

The love poems of that period were by and large expressions of a trembling and restlessness. Especially the following couplets which are most applicable and depict the spiritual condition in the best manner. Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

> O you whose pain is the treatment for my illness of failure. And whose remembrance in one solitary corner is my companion.

Hadrat Amīr Khusro *rahimahullāh* said:

> I am confounded in your hopes. O you towards whom all the eyes of the world are directed.
>
> We alone are confounded and silent, while the entire world is speaking about you.
>
> Khusro is the prisoner of your net. Where else can this poor fellow go to if he were to leave your alley?

As I had explained in detail, the trembling which Hadrat Wālā was experiencing was a very enjoyable one because the reason for it, as in his own words, was: "A hurry in the quest together with hope, and yearning for Allāh accompanied with hope in success." There was worry, but no fear. It was a beloved worry because it stemmed from yearning and enthusiasm. The enjoyment in it was, as in Hadrat Wālā's words: "My heart desired that everyone should have the same condition." This proves his affection towards the creation and ardent desire to proliferate the path (all of which are essentials of being a shaykh). As for those who are deficient in spiritual wealth, where will they ever tolerate others to join them!?

A Letter To Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

When Hadrat Wālā's enthusiastic condition increased beyond the limits, and the directives of his uncle, Pīrjī Imdād 'Alī Sāhib, only served to worsen his restlessness, he became very worried and concerned. He wrote a letter to his original mentor, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, in which he also clearly mentioned how he reverted to his uncle. Hadrat Wālā had reverted to him with noble intentions and a genuine quest. In fact, he had, in his simplicity, even requested Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's permission to frequent his uncle. The vast distance between himself and

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib resulted in the correspondence to each other to be a long drawn out affair, while Hadrat Wālā's condition needed a quick response. His continual spiritual changes demanded he send a quick letter to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in which he describes his condition and he acquires his objective as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, Hadrat Wālā had heard this principled statement of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: "Everyone listen attentively. I do not want to make anyone my slave, I want to make them the slaves of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh is the objective, not the shaykh. I presented to you whatever I have. If you desire more, you have my open permission to go and acquire it from wherever you wish. If you feel the need to pledge bayʿah to someone else, you have my permission for that as well."

Hadrat Wālā relates: "I experienced an intense thirst and quest during those days. Although I had already decided that I will revert to my own elders in India – especially Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* – I felt that if any person has any additional spiritual treasure, I will acquire it from him as well. As for our own elders, they are on our own creed, and I will eventually have to revert to them under all conditions. But if I were to revert to our own elders first, it would be most disrespectful to revert to others later on."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Reply

Look at the kind and affectionate manner in which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib responded after receiving Hadrat Wālā's letter in which he described his spiritual conditions. The person who brought the reply to Hadrat Wālā related to him: "When Hadrat Hājī Sāhib received and read your letter, he became quite distressed. He would go into his house, come out after some time, go in again and come out again. He said this several times: 'He is still a young man. He must have been overcome and could not bear it. But I am so far away, what can I do?'"

The person who brought the letter said: "Hadrat, I am leaving very soon [for India]." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib got very happy when he heard this. He dictated a reply and gave it to the person. He also asked him to convey this message verbally: "When this servant [referring to himself] is alive, why are you reverting to someone else?" When Hadrat Wālā heard of the person's arrival in Kānpūr, he hastened enthusiastically to him.

The person handed over Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's letter and also conveyed the verbal message. The following couplets apply to his situation:

> All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* my restless soul has found comfort when I suddenly received a letter from the city of my beloved.
>
> I placed my eyes of gratitude at the feet of the messenger [who brought the letter] because it brought delight to my expectant eyes.

The Reply Removes His Distress

Hadrat Wālā relates: "The man conveyed Hadrat's message to me before zuhr. The moment I heard it, it seemed as if someone placed a block of ice over my burning chest. More than half of my worries ended by the time of ʿasr, and everything was clear by maghrib time – there was no sign of any worry and distress."

I wrote a letter to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib the next morning and wrote the following applicable couplets of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* at the top of the letter:

> Yesterday morning he gave me salvation from my anger and gave me the fountain of life in the darkness of the very next night.
>
> The slavery of the tavern-keeper is a unique elixir. I became its dust and he conferred such high ranks to me.
>
> The hand of one's shaykh is not far from those who are not in his presence. His hand is most certainly in the control of none other than Allāh.

A Dream

During this period, Hadrat Wālā dreamt of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in which the latter said to him with reference to Pīrjī: "Do not remain in his company, you will develop an itch." This was also a type of supervision from the unseen.

At the time of sending the verbal message, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had written a letter in which he replied to Hadrat Wālā's spiritual conditions and gave it to a person to give it personally by hand to Hadrat Wālā. Some portions of it are quoted here. This is the 23rd letter from *Maktūbāt Imdādīyyah.*

May Allāh *taʿālā* grant you additional yearning and longing with the composure and clarity of the mind. Your letter has reached and I got to know you spiritual conditions. You mention that with the advice of Pīr Jī Sāhib you find some improvement. This improvement is only imaginary and temporary. You had also requested permission to visit Pīr Jī. This insignificant servant grants you permission to go to him. However, the devotional spiritual practices suggested by him will be harmful because the consequence of every spiritual exercise is difference. As the proverb goes: "Every flower has a different fragrance and colour."

You mentioned the reasons for the mind being scattered and divided. The treatment for this is in the book *Diyā' al-Qulūb*, pages 54 and 55. You may apply this treatment. Allāh willing, you will find improvement and good. And, Allāh willing, you will find your thoughts to be collected and composed again. Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Razzāq Sāhib also explained to me your conditions. That is all. Most probably dated 1313 A.H.

This letter which was a comforter of the hearts was filled with many rare facts of Sufism and most beneficial prescriptions for the removal of worries and doubts. But more than that, it was the result of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's prayers and focus which emanated from the depths of his heart. Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "I did not even experience any need to follow the prescriptions which were mentioned in the letter. The moment I heard the verbal message and read his letter, I was consoled and (as mentioned above) everything was clear by maghrib time – there was no sign of any worry and distress. I experienced absolute peace."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had written the following glad tiding: "Allāh willing, your temperament will experience rectitude and success, and your thoughts will become focussed." Allāh *taʿālā* fulfilled it so swiftly that years of worry came to an end within a few hours. Divine assistance removed Hadrat Wālā from the web of confusion and perplexity and conveyed him all at once to the shore of peace and tranquillity.

Severing Ties From Pīrjī Imdād Ṣāhib

Hadrat Wālā wrote a very emotional letter in Arabic to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* about how he reverted to his uncle. The portion in which he describes his restlessness was quoted previously at its appropriate place. We now quote that section in which he describes how his restlessness and worry were replaced by peace and calm. He writes:

ثم لما ساعدني الجد بلثم تراب نعليه وحضرت لديه، جددت الإرادة ليكون لما عسى أن يكون فات أعاده، فلما رجعت ازددت ظلماء، وأكاد أحسب السراب ماء، ورأيتني لا ازداد حيرة ووحشة، وضيقا ودهشة، كتبت إلى حبيب ما وقع من الحال، وناديت بالبلبال:

يا مرشدي يا موئلي يا مفزعي – يا ملجائي في مبدئي ومعادي

إرحم علي يا غياث فليس لي – كهفي سوى حبيبكم من زاد

فاز الأنام بكم وإن هائم – فانظر إلي برحمة يا هاد

يا سيدي لله شيئا انه – أنتم لي المجدي وانى جدي

فعذرني ونصرني وقال حبا وكرامة

وأقامني على ساحل السلامة

فترنمت شوقا تمغيت ذوقا

A poet says:

> Yesterday morning he gave me salvation from my anger, and gave me the fountain of life in the darkness of the very next night.
>
> The slavery of the tavern-keeper is a unique elixir. I became its dust and he conferred such high ranks to me.

قد لسعت حية الهوى كبدي – فلا طبيب لها ولا راقي

إلا الحبيب الذي شغفت به – فعنده رقيتي وترياقي

> The serpent of love bit my heart. There is no physician to treat it nor any soothsayer.
>
> Listen! The beloved by whom I am enamoured is the one who has the amulet and the treatment for me.

In short, by the help of Allāh *taʿālā* and through the blessings of the prayers and attention of his shaykh, Hadrat Wālā crossed this valley and, as per the instruction of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, distanced himself from his uncle. Although informing his uncle weighed heavily on Hadrat Wālā and he felt it disrespectful based on the absolute respect and noble thoughts which he had for him, he suppressed and overpowered his feelings in favour of the Sharīʿah. He wrote a very respectful and courteous letter to Pīrjī Sāhib in which he excused himself from any further spiritual consultation in accordance with the teachings of the Sharīʿah. Moreover, although he was closely related to him, Hadrat Wālā suspended visiting him because Hadrat Wālā was now looked up to by the masses and wanted to safeguard them from getting caught up with his uncle.

Respect For The Uncle Is Still Maintained

Although Hadrat Wālā severed his spiritual link with his uncle, Janāb Pīrjī Sāhib, he always maintained his respect for him and continues taking joy in relating incidents from his life and quoting his words of wisdom. Pīrjī Sāhib also maintained noble thoughts and love for Hadrat Wālā. A person went to Pīrjī Sāhib and criticized Hadrat Wālā's severing of ties with him. Pīrjī Sāhib stopped him immediately and said: "That is another matter. He is my son. My attitude towards him is similar to when he was an infant: he must have urinated on me and I must have hit him on one or two occasions. It is the same relationship at present. No one else has a right to say anything in this regard." Hadrat Wālā relates: "One of my uncle's murīds showed me a letter in which he had written: 'Based on differences in our creed, it is not appropriate for you to sit in his [Hadrat Wālā's] company, but you must never be disrespectful to him. He is fulfilling the demands of his position which are obligatory on him in the light of the Sharīʿah.'"

A Reply To Pīrjī's Offer

In addition to this bond and love in absentia, Pīrjī wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā after the latter had severed his link with him in which he said: "I received something from Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* as a trust from his chest to mine. You were a young and righteous man and eligible to receive it. I wanted to give this trust to you but you did not want to take it. If you want, I am still prepared to give it to you now."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "If what you want to give me is compliant with the Sharī'ah, I am prepared to accept it. But if it is in the slightest bit against the Sharī'ah, I ask you to excuse me from accepting it."

The Issue Of Maulūd

In short, Hadrat Wālā separated himself from Janāb Pīrjī Sāhib as a duty of the Sharī'ah, but he did it in a very respectful, dignified and beautiful manner. Even Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* with whom Hadrat Wālā was corresponding on this issue was most pleased in the manner in which he separated himself and approved of it. The gist of this correspondence was mentioned previously, but it is only part of the correspondence. The other part of it is with regard to the issue of maulūd. The gist of it is quoted from Hadrat Wālā's booklet, *Yād Yārā* which is a biography on Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu*.

> Although I had correct beliefs with regard to the disputed issues between those who are on the truth and those who are engrossed in innovations, I had been committing one particular mistake. Many thoughts and actions stemmed from this mistake. I am referring to those customary actions such as mīlād which the erudite scholars totally prohibit the masses from participating in because of some of the harms which such assemblies have. They also prohibit scholars – to a certain extent – from participating in these celebrations. I always considered those evils to be abhorrent and the one who commits them to be worthy of criticism. This was based on the correctness of my beliefs. I used to constantly apprise and inform the masses about these evils. However, I was convinced that the reason for the prohibition was the evils, and where the reason is not found, the prohibition will not apply. Therefore, since the 'ulamā' are free from these evils, there is no need to prohibit them from participating. Similarly, there is no need to prohibit the masses unilaterally. Rather, they should be given permission for the acts themselves, while the evils which they were committing in the process should be rectified. In fact, I considered this

permission to be desirable because it would correct their beliefs as well – the same incorrect beliefs which were the reasons for the prohibition. If we were to prohibit them unilaterally, the masses would consider us to be their antagonists and their beliefs will not get rectified.

I spent a considerable time in this condition and although I was occupied in teaching Hadīth, jurisprudence and other lessons, my mind never thought to the contrary. How can I ever thank Hadrat *quddisa sirruhu*? In his absolute compassion and affection, he conveyed his disappointment with me via Maulwī Munawwar ʿAlī Sāhib Darbhangūmī Marhūm. One of my mistakes in this regard was when some practices of a Sufi did not coincide with the Sharīʿah, I practised on the saying: "Accept what is good and reject what is bad." I followed some of the spiritual practices which he taught me, and also had the occasion of visiting him and staying in his company for some time. As for the evils and harms, I had the same notion as previously, viz. the beliefs of the ʿulamā' are correct and there is no real harm in this case. And it is sufficient to continue informing the masses about what is right and what is wrong. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* also expressed his particular disappointment in this regard. The level of his affection can be gauged from the fact that he never reprimanded me directly. This was in line with the Hadīth's description of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, viz. his level of affection and modesty did not permit him to reprimand anyone directly.

Similarly, although I visited Hadrat on numerous occasions, he never reprimanded me directly. In fact, he went one step further, viz. when anyone laid objections to my actions, Hadrat rationalized them and portrayed them in a good light. Another mistake which I committed is that Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had provided me with general details on the subject of the prohibition of getting involved in contentious issues, and asked me to expound on this subject. Since my mind was still bent on my opinions on this subject, I expounded on it in the

same light, wrote it down, and read it to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to remain in solitude and intermingled very little with the masses. He always had noble thoughts about the masses and was not fully aware of their ignorance and deviation. Consequently, he approved of my explanation and made a few changes here and there. Although I had written the subject matter, since Hadrat had personally instructed me to write it, he got it written from his side, embellished it with his stamp and signature, and permitted me to publish it on his behalf. It was published under the title *Fayslah Haft Mas'alah*. Some people of little intelligence considered this to be in support of their innovations. But how could they think this when it contained a clear refutation of those evils and harms? It is only people with correct beliefs and rational thinking who were given a concession. And this too was based on my thinking that why should the evils of the masses have an effect on the 'ulamā'? Hadrat *quddisa sirruhu* conveyed all this via Maulwī Munawwar 'Alī Sāhib. When he conveyed it to me, I immediately realized my error by virtue of Hadrat's powerful impact. But I felt the need to correspond with him for further clarification. Subsequently, several letters were written from both sides. These were published in my biography.

In short, through Allāh's grace, I was eventually apprised of my error through insight and thorough investigation. On being apprised of it, a huge door of knowledge which had been shut to me for a long time was now opened to me. The essence of it was: Corruption of beliefs is certainly the basis for prohibition. However, corruption of beliefs is all-encompassing irrespective of whether the doer commits it directly or he is the cause of it. Thus, if the doer is an ignoramus, his beliefs will certainly be corrupt. If he is from among the 'ulamā', then although he possesses correct beliefs, he will be the cause of corrupting the beliefs of the masses. And we are prohibited from becoming the causes of

corruption. Although it is possible to apprise the masses of the evils and harms by explaining to them, all the masses cannot be rectified through it, nor will the explanation reach all of them. Thus, if an ordinary person heard of a certain scholar committing the act but was not aware of how he [the scholar] rectified the beliefs, he will become the cause of this ordinary person's deviation. Obviously, if a person becomes the cause of deviation of just one person, it is a major evil. Even if there are a few benefits in the evil, the principle is that if an act contains both good and bad consequences and the act is not an essential objective in the Sharīʿah, the act will be discarded. Based on this principle, we will not pay any attention to acquiring those [few] benefits. Instead, we will discard the act to abstain from its evils. However, if an act is essential and some evils are experienced, we will not give up the act but makes efforts to rectify the harms.

All these injunctions and principles are clearly stated in the Ahādīth and juridical literature – they are not unknown to experts in the field. I have written in this regard in my book, *Islāh ar-Rusūm* (*Rectification of Customs*). Once my thoughts and opinions on the subject were rectified, all other related matters were rectified by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. Consequently, I also gained salvation from the companionship and instructions of dervishes who did not comply with the Sharīʿah. I wrote an addendum to *Fayslah Haft Mas'alah* and had it printed. All the misgivings and criticisms were removed in this way.

Progress In Spiritual Conditions

From Hadrat Wālā's various spiritual changes which were described previously, the reader must have gauged that each change was superior to the previous one. We demonstrated this as we moved along. I recall a statement of Hadrat Wālā at this point. He said: "Each condition is higher than the previous one. For example, if retraction is experienced after expansion, the retraction is higher than the expansion. If the retraction is followed by expansion once again, the expansion is better than

the retraction and also superior to the previous expansion, and so on."

These different ranks continued in Hadrat Wālā's various spiritual conditions. The condition which he experienced before he could go and stay in the blessed company of his shaykh is known as yearning in the definition of the Sufis. On reaching his shaykh, the yearning was changed to affinity which was higher than the yearning. When he returned to Kānpūr, he experienced yearning once again. This yearning was superior to the affinity and the first yearning. Thereafter, through the blessings of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's attention and focus, the yearning was changed to affinity. This was explained in detail previously.

Affinity With Allāh

Affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* surpassed all previous conditions and its essential consequence was that he experienced total affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* and aversion for everything apart from Him. This resulted in a condition which is described by Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

> So that you may realize that when Allāh *taʿālā* embraces a person, he becomes free from all the occupations of this world.

Consequently, Hadrat Wālā gradually began experiencing a dislike for all relationships. Although he did experience it before going to Makkah Muʿazzamah, it was during his formative years and the condition also stemmed from immaturity and was not firmly entrenched. This is why Hadrat Hājī Sāhib did not permit him to sever his relations even when he sought his permission. As for the estrangement which he experienced now, it stemmed from steadfastness. It was therefore firmly established and timely. It could not disappear just like that. The experiencing of this estrangement marked the realization of that time which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had referred to when he had said: "When you become tired of Kānpūr, you must proceed to Thānah Bhawan and settle down there."

Prelude To Separation From Kānpūr

Affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* and estrangement from the creation increased day by day. This eventually caused him to become

estranged from even a beloved place like Kānpūr and an enjoyable occupation such as teaching. The time had now come for Hadrat Wālā to be at the peak from every angle, and devote himself solely to spiritual services.

There was a strong unseen zeal which caused Hadrat Wālā to become tired of Kānpūr. This despite the fact that he loved the place so much. When Hadrat Wālā was leaving Makkah and bidding farewell to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, the latter had advised him that if he becomes tired of Kānpūr, he must not go to any other place. He must place his trust in Allāh *ta'ālā* and proceed straight to Thānah Bhawan. Hadrat Wālā was quite surprised at the time and wondered why Hadrat was saying this to him and why should he become tired there!? After all, the people of Kānpūr loved him so much and their treatment of him had got him so used to the place that he had planned to make it his permanent place of residence. Hadrat Wālā thought to himself that it was good that Hadrat Hājī Sāhib added the condition of "tired" because he did not think he would ever get tired of it, nor would the occasion come when he would have to leave it. However, the following couplet had to manifest itself:

> When you will something in a particular way, Allāh *ta'ālā* also wills it in the same way. Allāh *ta'ālā* fulfils the wishes of the righteous.

Allāh *ta'ālā* had now willed for Hadrat Wālā to render a new type of service, viz. he had to take the place of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, establish himself as his representative, and to re-inhabit the old Khānqāh Imdādīyyah in Thānah Bhawan which during the time of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was given the title of the "Shop of Cognition" by the spiritual masters. It was now Hadrat Wālā's duty to reopen this "shop", re-illuminate it, and to make it the centre from which the teachings and sciences of the Imdādīyyah family will spread to the different corners of the world. By the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā*, this is exactly what happened. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, the Khānqāh became worthy of its old title once again.

Gradual Separation From The Kānpūr Madrasah

Hadrat Wālā intended to totally give up his teaching and other responsibilities in Kānpūr at the end of 1314 A.H. However, his excellent dealings, character, beautiful manner of teaching and lecturing had made the people of this city so attached to him,

that it was no easy task to leave them all of a sudden. Hadrat Wālā was able to leave them only after resorting to a beautiful plan and ensuring that he conceals his plans from them. Had they come to know of his intentions from the beginning, they would have never allowed him to leave. Glory to Allāh! By virtue of his Allāh-given intelligence and character, he resorted to an exceptional approach and withdrew gradually from the Madrasah so that the Madrasah authorities did not experience any setback in any of its departments nor was there any problem on the education side. These were matters which Hadrat Wālā was most concerned about – he did not want the Madrasah to be affected in any way by his departure.

Hadrat Wālā Does Not Take Any Wage

The first thing he did was he stopped taking a salary from the Madrasah. People were opposed to this because they felt that if he did not take a salary, he might decrease his contact with the Madrasah. They were also concerned about the loss which Hadrat Wālā will have to bear. Coincidentally, the Madrasah was experiencing a shortfall in its income. So he convinced them by saying: "The Madrasah income has decreased and I am the biggest expense of the Madrasah, i.e. fifty rupees per month. I will not take my salary for as long as the Madrasah does not get any additional income."

Hadrat Wālā Gives Up The Post Of Head-Teacher

Once he convinced everyone not to give him a wage, Hadrat Wālā set out to give up the post of head-teacher. The Madrasah used to publish a monthly newsletter. Hadrat Wālā published an announcement on behalf of the principal that the teachers in the Madrasah were not given promotions since quite some time. Therefore, teacher number one [Hadrat Wālā] is being promoted to the post of patron. Teacher number two, Maulānā Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib, is being promoted to the post of teacher number one, and so on. In this way, all the teachers are being promoted. Some people had their reservations about this and opposed it, but Hadrat Wālā scolded them by saying: "You people are not happy about my promotion and patronage!?" They all fell silent.

Teaching Arrangements

Hadrat Wālā took it on himself to teach those students who were on the verge of completing their studies. He managed to do this by saying: "They have lessons with several teachers who cannot give sufficient time to them. These students need more time with their teachers so that they can complete quickly. On the other hand, I have more than enough time on my hands. So I take the responsibility of teaching them altogether." Hadrat Wālā did this so that when he leaves, no student is affected in the least. These are students who are on the verge of completing and he would have completed teaching them by the time he decides to leave. In this way, their lessons will be completed and the remaining students will continue studying under the other teachers as they had been doing.

Moving Away From The Classroom

As for the classroom itself, Hadrat Wālā now began teaching in the musjid. The reason which he gave the Madrasah authorities was that those who are about to complete are quite a few, and the classroom in the Madrasah is small. He added: "Since I am not taking a wage, it is permissible for me to teach in the musjid. I will therefore teach in the musjid while my classroom will be occupied by Maulwī Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib, the teacher number one."

Giving Up Administrative Duties

In this subtle way, Hadrat Wālā literally handed over the Madrasah to Maulānā Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib by making him teacher number one and delegating other Madrasah affairs to him. In fact, a few administrative duties which were specifically carried out by Hadrat Wālā were given to him. Hadrat Wālā did this by offering the excuse that he does not have enough time. However, he added the condition that his own name will be written at the end of each document, although it was written by the Maulānā. Hadrat Wālā added this condition so that people do not suspect that he had plans to leave the Madrasah. Subsequently, the Maulānā would end each of the Madrasah documents as follows: "Ashraf ʿAlī, written by Muhammad Is-hāq." Even after Hadrat Wālā left the Madrasah, the Maulānā continued writing all the Madrasah documents in the same way. This continued for many years. The blessings of this was that even after Hadrat Wālā left, the

Madrasah continued running smoothly by Allāh's grace. It is running to this day, although its outlook has changed.

Hadrat Wālā Goes Home

Hadrat Wālā had no more classes to teach one his students completed their studies. As he had planned, he could easily offer the following excuse: "I had to bear many difficulties and hardships in teaching such a large number of students, and it has fatigued me quite a bit. I need a few days of rest." There were no restrictions on him because he had already given up taking a wage. He therefore took leave without any problems and proceeded to his hometown. But he did not inform anyone at all about his intention of giving up the Madrasah completely. However, a person from Thānah Bhawan did write to someone in Kānpūr and informed him about it. Hadrat Wālā had already informed some of his people at home about his intentions before leaving the Madrasah. The person in Kānpūr came to Hadrat Wālā and asked: "Is it true that you are leaving Kānpūr?" In order to conceal his plans, Hadrat Wālā scolded the person by saying: "Are you just waiting for me to leave this place? I am offended over the fact that you could even have such thoughts about me, and then to come and ask me about it." The matter ended there and then, and the rumour could not spread.

When Hadrat Wālā left, he did not take all his goods with him or else people would suspect that he was going for good. However, he had been packing all his goods and possessions since many days. When he was about to leave, he had all the packed goods kept in one place and locked up so that it would be easy to ask for them to be sent. Hadrat Wālā relates: "There was no end to my joy from the time the train left Kānpūr. I felt as if I was freed from a prison and I thanked Allāh *taʿālā* profusely."

Hadrat Wālā seemed to be reciting the following lines of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī while proceeding to his beloved hometown:

> Why should I not intend going to my city? Why should I not become the soil at the feet of my beloved?
>
> When I cannot bear to be in a strange place or to remain on a journey, I should rather proceed to my

city and I should myself become the city of my beloved.

I must become of those who are privy to the proximity of the beloved [Allāh] behind the veils and I must be included among the slaves of Allāh.

Being intoxicated in the love of my beloved [Allāh] has always been my occupation. I ought to renew my effort and become engrossed in my work.

Period Of Stay In Kānpūr

Hadrat Wālā left Kānpūr in 1315 A.H. It is gauged from some of his letters that he left in Safar of that year. He had commenced his services in that city in Safar 1301 A.H. This means that the Mujaddid of this century – there are strong indications to this effect in the books of tafsīr and Hadīth – commenced his religious services in Kānpūr at the very beginning of this century and continued imparting external sciences for a full period of fourteen years. By and large, the imparting of spiritual sciences commenced in Rabī' al-Awwal 1310 A.H.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Is Informed

When Hadrat Wālā informed Hadrat Hājī Sāhib of his intention of settling down permanently in Thānah Bhawan, the latter expressed his extreme joy and wrote several prayers and supplications in his favour in many letters one after the other. He wrote with full confidence: "It is better that you came to Thānah Bhawan. I have hope that many people will benefit internally and externally from you and that this lineage will continue."

Supervising The Affairs Of Kānpūr Madrasah

Even for several months after returning to his hometown, Hadrat Wālā did not inform the people of Kānpūr of his intention of not going back there. He continued enquiring about Madrasah affairs and providing his counsel.

Once he was fully satisfied that everything was running smoothly and there was no fear of any negative impact on the administration of the Madrasah, he informed them that he did not intend returning to Kānpūr. He wrote the following most fitting couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* and sent it to them:

> My heart's attitude towards the doings of the Madrasah is such that I feel I should spend more time with my beloved and my drink.

The People Of Kānpūr Are Concerned

When Hadrat Wālā's letter reached the people of Kānpūr, there was no end to their worry and trepidation. They continued in their efforts to convince him to come back. After consulting among themselves, they eventually requested him earnestly to merely come and stay in Kānpūr without having any responsibilities whatsoever. Instead of paying him 50 rupees a month, they will continue paying him 100 rupees although he was not to do any work at all. The extent of their attachment to Hadrat Wālā can be gauged from this request. Instead of sending a cold reply to them, Hadrat Wālā wrote: "I decided to settle down in my hometown after receiving indications in this regard from Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. You should rather write to Hadrat."

A Letter To Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

The people wrote a letter to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in which they pleaded to him and begged him to permit Hadrat Wālā to live in Kānpūr. However, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib himself had been waiting for this to happen since a long time, why would he now give such a permission? Not only did he consider it appropriate for Hadrat Wālā to remain in Thānah Bhawan, he felt it essential for the benefit of Allāh's creation. This need is witnessed by all today. But at that time, it was only an insightful personality like Hadrat Hājī Sāhib who could have had such a strong opinion in this regard.

He writes in letter no. 49, dated 15 Muharram 1317 A.H.:

> I now write to you and say that it is essential for you to remain permanently in Thānah Bhawan. If you have some time during the holidays or at any other time when you feel like going there, you may visit and see to the people. As for the seekers, they must come to Thānah Bhawan – it is not so far from Kānpūr. I wrote the same thing in my letter to the people of Kānpūr.

As per Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's advice, Hadrat Wālā used to go to Kānpūr whenever the people there invited him. They used to

invite him regularly, and he used to respond happily. Hadrat Wālā loved them a lot and still does because of their love and devotion to him. But presently he has stopped travelling altogether.

Hājī Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib

Janāb Hājī Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib, the father of Janāb Hājī ʿAbd al-Qayyūm Sāhib, was not in Kānpūr at the time when Hadrat Wālā left Kānpūr. He was gone to Calcutta. When he returned, he was severely pained to hear about Hadrat Wālā's departure and his intention of not returning. He said to the people: "Why did you even allow him to go? Had I been here, I would have locked the Madrasah, put the Madrasah keys in his pocket, and told him that if he was bent on going, he must take the Madrasah with him." The people said: "But he did not even inform anyone of his intentions. No one even had an inkling that he was leaving with the intention of not coming back."

Hadrat Wālā's Intelligence

Hadrat Wālā's absolute intelligence, sharpness, sound planning and concern for the wellbeing of the Madrasah are clear and obvious. Normally, on such occasions people worry about their own advantages – especially when there is to be no contact with the Madrasah, who would ever worry about the wellbeing of the Madrasah?

It only happens with the will of Allāh. This is the grace of Allāh which He bestows on whomever He wills.

A NEW PERIOD OF HIS LIFE

A Life Of Reliance On Allāh

After devoting fourteen years of his life teaching in Kānpūr, Hadrat Wālā returned to his hometown. As per the instruction of his shaykh, he occupied himself in imparting external and internal blessings by way of his written works, discourses, assemblies, instruction and training. He lived a life of reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and is continuing in this way to this day. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to benefit from him for a long period of time.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib wrote to him in letter no. 29, dated 16 Jumādā 1314 A.H.:

> I had written with absolute confidence in a previous letter that you must maintain your contact with Kānpūr for as long as Allāh *taʿālā* wills. You can then go to Thānah Bhawan after placing all your trust in Allāh *taʿālā* without entering into the employ of anyone. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator of the means, He will set right all your affairs. Inshā Allāh, you will not have to hesitate or doubt in any way.

This is exactly what happened. Allāh *taʿālā* blessed Hadrat Wālā with external riches and he is living like a king despite the fact that he is very strict and cautious about accepting gifts. He has laid down several conditions for the acceptance of gifts and will never accept them if any of his conditions are not met. Large amounts of money and many valuable items were returned and are still returned when his conditions are not met. Allāh *taʿālā* then give him far more in accordance with his conditions. All this is by the blessings and prayers of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. This is why Hadrat Wālā says that one of the etiquette of reliance on Allāh is that a person should not abandon the means without obtaining the opinion of one's shaykh.

An Incident Concerning Inherited Wealth

Hadrat Wālā did not want to accept some of his father's estate because he considered it doubtful. Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* said to him: "If you accept it, there is leeway from

the Sharīʿah for its acceptance. If you do not take it, Allāh *taʿālā* will never cause you any worry about your livelihood." Since Hadrat Wālā enjoyed the prayers of such people, why should he not receive help from the unseen?

Two Dreams

Hadrat Wālā dreamt of a pond from which instead of water, silver was gushing forth and following him wherever he was going. Hadrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* interpreted it as follows: "Inshā Allāh, the world will follow you wherever you go but you will not pay any attention to it." All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, this dream was realized.

Hadrat Wālā saw another dream with regard to authority and fame. It is written by Hadrat Wālā himself in *Asdaq ar-Ru'yā fī Tashrīf Baʿdil Ashrāf bi al-Bushrā*. It is quoted here:

> I saw a men's drawing room similar to the one of my teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. On the terrace was a pious man who was very fastidious, wearing pure white clothes and seated on an elaborate couch. He wrote something on a piece of paper, stamped his seal on it and gave it to me. The writing of the stamp was on all sides of the paper. When I read it, it contained the words: "We gave you honour." And the seal contained the word "Muhammad". In the same dream I saw the men's drawing room of a worldly person. A worldly ruler was seated at the table. He also wrote something on a piece of paper, stamped it with his seal and gave it to me. It contained the same words: "We gave you honour." But the wording of the seal could not be read.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, both dreams were realized word for word. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred unparalleled honour of Dīn and this world to Hadrat Wālā. This is clearly visible to the world today. Many wealthy people, businessmen, people of authority, nawabs, rulers, and even some governors have been consulting Hadrat Wālā and continue to do so. Hadrat Wālā treats them respectfully in accordance with their rank, while maintaining his independence at the same time. Although this is not a basis to prove his acceptance in Allāh's sight, it has been the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to cause all sections of the community to incline

towards a person who is to be the centre of guidance and rectitude. Allāh *taʿālā* does this so that the personality's benefit and contribution is all-embracing.

Request For Prayers When In Debt

Hadrat Wālā was totally devoted to his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* as per the instruction of his shaykh. But he incurred a few debts in the beginning. He requested Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* to pray in his favour and probably wrote to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in this regard as well. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib wrote in his letter number 38, dated 6 Rajab 1315 A.H.: "I am praying for your success in your steadfastness and reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you with continued internal and external progress."

As for Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*, he said to Hadrat Wālā: "If you wish I can make a recommendation in your favour for you to teach at the Madrasah in Deoband." Hadrat Wālā replied with absolute respect: "My purpose in mentioning it at present was solely to obtain your prayers. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib has prohibited me from taking up a job anywhere after leaving Kānpūr. But if this is really what Hadrat feels I should do, I would consider it to be an instruction from Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and think to myself that Hadrat Hājī Sāhib has cancelled his previous instruction and issued this new instruction. After all, a new instruction abrogates the old one."

Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* became quite worried when he heard this and said: "No, no. If Hadrat Hājī Sāhib prohibited you in this regard, I can never advise you to the contrary. I will pray in your favour that Allāh *taʿālā* releases you from your debts."

Release From Debts

Through the blessings of the prayers of both personalities, Hadrat Wālā was released quite quickly from his debts. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he never experienced any poverty thereafter. He devoted himself to serving Allāh's creation with total peace of mind and tranquillity. This was especially so with regard to his written works and exhortations.

Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to be extremely pleased whenever he heard about Hadrat Wālā's services to the Dīn. On one occasion, while expressing his joy to Hadrat Wālā,

he said to him: "Brother! My heart will really be pleased when people assemble around you in order to engage in Allāh's remembrance." Hadrat Wālā replied: "Inshā Allāh, that will also be realized through your prayers." This wish of Hadrat Maulānā was soon fulfilled and seekers began reverting to Hadrat Wālā in large numbers. This programme is increasing day after day.

Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* would periodically send seekers to Hadrat Wālā. In fact, he had started doing this when Hadrat Wālā was still based in Kānpūr.

A Few Spiritual Conditions After Settling Down In Thānah Bhawan

The various spiritual conditions, changes and fluctuations in the spiritual path which were experienced by Hadrat Wālā at different times until the year 1314 A.H. were described in detail in the previous pages. A new phase of his life - the phase after he settled down permanently in Thānah Bhawan - commences from 1315 A.H. This phase is described now.

It is naturally extremely important because Hadrat Wālā severed all obligations and devoted himself totally to traversing the path of Sufism and freed himself totally for this purpose. He came and settled down permanently in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan for the same purpose. What can be said of the spiritual progress which he made here! He became so overpowered with the closeness which he experienced with Allāh *taʿālā* that he became terrified by all associates. At the same time, his heart could not tolerate impoliteness. He was forced into thinking of severing his ties completely from all people and to live somewhere away from everyone. Despite this intense desire, he felt it most inappropriate to take any such step without consulting the elders. Subsequently, he complained to Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* about the large numbers of people who were coming to him and sought his permission to stay out of the town. Hadrat Gangohī did not permit him. He said: "This has not been the way of our elders. It is most inappropriate to do such a thing. But if your heart is not inclined to people and you feel they are imposing on you, stay aloof from them and do not bother about them. If you yourself feel constricted by them, why should you display any politeness towards them?" The following couplet applies here:

> I am prepared to sacrifice those thousands who are strangers to Allāh *taʿālā* for that one person who is His true friend.

Hadrat Wālā accepted and acted on Hadrat Gangohī's advice. The words of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* apply here:

> I have attached myself to You and cut off myself from all apart from You. When a person gains Your cognition, he does not bother about anyone else.

Hadrat Wālā began spending most of his time in solitude and private conversations with his True Beloved. Hadrat Āshiftah *rahimahullāh* says in a couplet:

> It is so lovely to sit in your company. I can speak in whispers with you. The door of the house is shut and I can open the bottle.

Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* says:

> Thinking of your face and locks of hair is the prescribed morning and evening remembrance for me.

Prelude To Retraction

In short, after giving up his teaching post in Kānpūr, Hadrat Wālā came to his beloved hometown, Thānah Bhawan, settled down in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah and became engrossed with Allāh *taʿālā*.

> He disregarded his own body in his love for his beloved. He disregarded the entire world in his remembrance of his beloved.

For some time, Hadrat Wālā became a manifestation of the following couplets of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*:

> O you who reserve a place in the alley of the tavern! Although you are sitting with your hands concealed in your garments, you are the Jamshed[1] of your time.
>
> O you who spends his days and nights thinking of the face and hair-locks of his beloved! You have the

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[1] Name of an ancient king of Persia.

> opportunity because you are a good person in the morning and at night.

Hadrat Wālā continued traversing his journey towards Allāh *taʿālā* and got closer and closer to him with absolute peace of mind and serenity. But where is there eternal peace in love?! Love is like an eternal illness – a lover does not get peace until the very end of his life. A drop in spiritual conditions is from among the essentials of Sufism. This is gauged from verses of the Qur'ān, Ahādīth and statements[1] of the spiritual masters. These will be quoted later on.

Changes In The Condition Of A Seeker

As per the norm of Allāh *taʿālā*, the quickest way a seeker can progress in the path is for him not to remain stagnant in one condition. Allāh *taʿālā* almost always treats the seekers in this way. They experience retraction and expansion, fear and hope, fright and affinity, ascent and descent. In short, a seeker experiences ups and downs during different times and places of his journey, and in different forms. This separation and joining are described as follows:

> You summoned me and then you pushed me away.
> You pushed me away and then you called me again.
>
> The city is deserted and the forest is filled with flowers. O love! You have conveyed me to so many different places.

A seeker constantly experiences changes in his conditions. His heart - which is essentially a reflection of the True Beloved – sometimes experiences the beauty of the Beloved and sometimes His power and might. These are really the rays of one light. Hadrat Hāfiz describes it as follows:

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[1] When a person experiences spiritual conditions of this type, it is most beneficial for him to read the statements of the spiritual masters. Most of them are written in the form of poetry. This biography – especially this chapter – contains many such poems. The seekers of different temperaments may study them and apply them – either in totality or partially – according to their own temperaments. These poems are not the essential objectives of this biography.

> The reflection on this drink and the opposing picture which you see are actually manifestations of the face of the drink provider which has fallen on the goblet.

Every act of the beloved is beloved in the eyes of the lover. Hadrat Hāfiz says:

> O you whose every form is beautiful and every place is pleasing! My heart is pleased with the slightest thanks which emanates from your mouth.
>
> Your existence is delicate like the petals of a flower. You are an embodiment of beauty like the head of the orchard.
>
> The garden of my thoughts is filled with flowers and buds because of you. The pores of my heart are filled with happiness because of your beautiful hair-locks.
>
> The manner of your coquetry is sweet and effects of your gazes are salty. Your eyes and tears are beautiful, your height is captivating.
>
> I die right before your eyes because when I see your beautiful face, the same old illness hurts me.
>
> There are dangers from all sides in the jungle of obliteration. I am overjoyed by your friendship and cannot contain myself.

In accordance with this overpowering divine quality, after Hadrat Wālā severed ties with his associates while remaining in his hometown for about a year, he had to face a terrifying and difficult obstacle in the path of spiritual progress. His heart suddenly experienced a condition which completely annihilated the internal peace and tranquillity which he had been enjoying for some time. He fell into a severe worry and grief, and he seemed to be saying:

> You have inflicted an unseen injury on my chest. I am astonished at how you shot an arrow without a bow.

This was a very important stage in Hadrat Wālā's spiritual life, and probably the last obstacle in his path. Before providing details in this regard, I consider it appropriate to give it a title so that it could be highlighted. The title is:

Lost In Fright

Before I can relate this story of grief, I quote a poem which was written by Hadrat Wālā himself:

> You have seen how I drink, now see how I sting. You saw my comfortable living, now see my injury.

I now commence with the name of Allāh *taʿālā* and provide details in this regard:

> We placed our heart in this endless ocean and stormy sea. Its sailing and its anchor is in the name of Allāh.

This terrifying episode commences with a sudden murder. The following couplet applies to it:

> I do not know what the letter contains. But what I do see is that its address has been written with blood.

Commencement Of Grief

Details are as follows: Hadrat Wālā's senior wife had an uncle who was a landlord and pensioner sub-inspector of Charthāwal. There was a dispute with some farmers who eventually martyred him. The moment Hadrat Wālā's senior wife received this dreadful news, she proceeded to Charthāwal with Hadrat Wālā. All the burial arrangements were carried out under his supervision. Even the bathing of the deceased was done in Hadrat Wālā's presence. In the course of bathing him, the scene of the injured head of the deceased and the sorrowful state of his body remained before Hadrat Wālā all the time. The scene severely injured Hadrat Wālā's sensitive and pining heart. But he did not seem to be affected by it at the time. He was occupied by all the burial arrangements with absolute calm. After the burial, he returned to the funeral house, sat on the porch and heard the crying of the women from inside. His heart was already injured from before. But when he heard the crying, he was struck by a fatal wound in his heart. He became restless and severely depressed to the extent of perceiving a type of palpitation.

His heart had not gotten over this one tragedy when another tragedy struck his in-laws' family. He had to go to Gangoh for this purpose. His injured heart now received another blow, and his wounded heart suffered another wound. Although the

second tragedy was not as serious as the previous one, it helped to increase the severity of the previous one.

Displeased With Life

Hadrat Wālā's heart was becoming seriously affected by this situation. While he was performing ablution for the tahajjud salāh, a terrible thought crossed his mind unwittingly. It essentially comprised of a few words which suddenly fell in his imagination. This was not something new because such fears are normally experienced by the seekers. In fact, even the Companions *radiyallāhu 'anhum* experienced them. This is categorically proven from the Hadīth:

ذاك صريح الإيمان

That is a clear indication of īmān.

Hadrat Wālā must have experienced similar fears in the past. But the fear on this occasion was so severe and so intense that he became displeased with life. A poet says:

> There is no joy in life without a friend. The same joy cannot be experienced when a friend is not present.

Hadrat Wālā even experienced whisperings of suicide. He relates: "A person came to visit me on one occasion. He had a loaded gun with him. The thought came several times in my mind to say to him: 'Fire the gun and purify this world of my impure existence.' The reason for this is that after experiencing this condition and these thoughts, I considered myself to be worse than Pharaoh and Hāmān, although I did consider myself to be a believer and them to be unbelievers. Since this has to do with personal preferences, I cannot explain it in a simpler manner. I felt that the calamity in which they [Pharaoh and Hāmān] were was such that they could have got freedom from it in a single minute by merely accepting īmān. Whereas I cannot obtain freedom from my calamity even after several years."

Hadrat Wālā's Note On The Above Situation

The above condition and its irrationality can be easily refuted by the following traditional proofs:

في رسالة القشيرية عن حمدون (المتوفى ٢٧١) قال من ظن أن نفسه خير من نفس فرعون فقد أظهر الكبر.

H̲amdūn (d. 271 A.H.) states in Risālah al-Qushayrīyyah*: If a person considers his self to be better than the self of Pharaoh, he has certainly expressed pride.*

A stronger but more cautious explanation than the above is the following statement of the S̲ah̲ābī, H̲ad̲rat Usāmah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu*:

حتى تمنيت ...إلى...أسلمت يومئذ. رواه مسلم في باب تحريم قتل الكافر بعد قوله لا إله إلا الله، من كتاب الإيمان

He had made this statement after a judgemental error on his part in a certain jihād. Imām Nawawī *rah̲imahullāh* says in his commentary to it:

معناه لم يكن تقدم إسلامي بن ابتدأت الآن الإسلام لمحو عني ما تقدم، وقال هذا الكلام من عظم ما وقع فيه. وجه الدلالة ظاهر حيث رجح بعض الأحوال المذمومة على بعض الأحوال المحمودة لكون الأول أقرب إلى دفع الضرر من الثاني لعارض مع أن حقيقة الأمر عكسه في نفسه.

This means: "I had no past Islam. I commenced with Islam now because whatever I had done before this was all wiped out." He said this because of the serious nature of what he had done…The proof from this incident is obvious in the sense that he gave preference to certain blameworthy conditions over certain praiseworthy conditions because the former were more likely to repulse the harm than the latter because of an obstacle. This despite the fact that the real situation is the opposite in itself.

H̲ad̲rat Wālā said with regard to the severity of this condition: "A major problem was that when I used to sit to engage in dhikr – which is actually a condition of closeness with Allāh *taʿālā* – that detestable fear would return to me. If I wanted to stop dhikr – a condition of aloofness from Allāh *taʿālā* - in order to save myself from the fear returning, my heart could not bear it in any way. It was as though I was experiencing the following condition:

> I am the candle which melts away life. You are the morning which brings joy to the heart. If I do not see you, I burn. If you enable me to see you, I die.
>
> I am so close. I am as far as I said I am. I neither have the courage to join myself with you, nor the strength to separate myself from you.

In short, I was caught up in a severe conflict. It was such a harsh condition that although I was physically healthy, I preferred death thousands of times over life."

Reasons Why Hadrat Wālā's Fear Intensified

Hadrat Wālā relates: "There were three reasons why this terrible fear had such an impact on me:

(1) Consecutive calamities (which were mentioned previously) had injured and melted the heart from the very beginning. This resulted in a condition of sorrow and negativity which made it susceptible to the fear. When this fear descended, the heart could not combat it nor fight back because of its weakness and depression. This is why it settled down easily in the heart.

(2) After leaving Kānpūr, I went into extremes in abstaining from permissible occupations and kept my heart totally aloof from all interactions. Later on, experience thought me that such excesses are harmful because while the heart has been emptied of these interactions on one hand, on the other hand it cannot be filled with anything else because the unseen world is something which we cannot see. Thus, in this condition when the heart was empty, Satan got an excellent opportunity to cast whisperings into it. It is stated in a Hadīth that when the outward form of Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* was created, Satan walked around him and inspected him carefully. When he saw that he was empty on the inside, he became very happy and realized that if this is his natural disposition, he will not be able to control himself. (In other words, since he is empty from inside, it will be easy for me to get into him). The Hadīth reads as follows:

عن أنس أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لما صور الله اٰدم في الجنة تركه ما شاء الله أن يتركه، فجعل إبليس يطيف به فينظر ما هو، فلما راٰه أجوف عرف أنه خلق خلقا لا يتمالك. رواه مسلم.

Anas radiyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates that Rasūlullāh* sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said: "When Allāh* taʿālā *created the form of Ādam in Paradise, He left him like that for some time. Satan began walking around him to see what he really was. When he saw that he was empty and hollow inside, he realized that Allāh* taʿālā *created a creation which will not be able to control itself."*

(3) The fear appeared to be contradictory to perfection in love [for Allāh *taʿālā*]. This is why it was extremely difficult for me."

I [the author] say: A fear which appeared to be contradictory to perfection in love and was yet able to cause so much of grief and distress was really an indication of perfection in love. As per the words of the Hadīth:

ذاك صريح الإيمان

That is a clear indication of īmān.

However, an outer perfection in love is enough to cause restlessness later on. A poet says in this regard:

> The heart of a seeker experiences thousands of sorrows even though there is no shortage of happiness in it.

Steps To Putting An End To The Fear

After explaining the three causes of the intense and prolonged fear, Hadrat Wālā said: "From my experience, I learnt three very beneficial procedures and courses of action for the seekers to put an end to the three causes of fear.

1. As far as possible, a seeker must resort to fortifying tonics and refreshing practices to strengthen and relax the heart. He must try to abstain from distressing causes so that the heart remains strong and he is able to bear such conditions. A sorrowful incident which is beyond one's control (e.g. the death of someone) is from among the strong causes of distress to the heart. This is irrespective of whether the sorrow

is because of one's own pain, out of concern for another or the effect of the definite or assumed consequences of the incident playing in one's mind all the time or speaking about it verbally. In other words, to wilfully think about it and delve into it or to speak a lot about it. This causes considerable damage to the heart and results in its distress and perplexity. Although it is not within one's control to be naturally saddened by a bloody incident and also not harmful, thinking of it all the time and speaking about it repeatedly is certainly within one's control and also harmful.

This is why the texts [of the Qur'ān and Hadīth] contain instructions such as "do not worry". The fact that such a prohibition exists means that it is within one's control. Just as it is in one's power to continue the grief, it is also within one's power to put an end to it. Experience – supported by proofs – teaches us that the heart must be made to become preoccupied in some other important obligatory or permissible act, or in some act of obedience. This is also supported by the teaching to read *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn* (to Allāh we belong and to Him is our return). After all, it is essentially a special way of introspection at the time of consoling another. The Sharʿī and linguistic term for this – *istirjāʿ*[1] - also supports what I am saying [*istirjāʿ* - means: to get back, to recover, to regain]. The statement of a gnostic clearly backs this:

كما في طبقات الكبرى عن الحسين بن عبد الصنجي قال: لا يقطعك شيء عن شيء إلا إذا كان القاطع أتم وأكمل وأعلى عندك، فإن كان مثله أو دونه فلا يقطعك، فالحكم لما غلب على القلب.

As stated in Tabaqāt al-Kubrā *from al-Husayn ibn ʿAbdillāh as-Sanjī who said: Do not allow anything to cut you off from another unless the first [cutter] is better, superior to and higher according to you. If it is equal to it or lower, do not allow it to cut you off from it. The ruling is in favour of what overpowers the heart.*

I added the condition of "excessive" in my prohibition to thinking of a sorrowful incident. This is because to abstain from talking about it completely and "bottling" oneself totally from the incident have also proven to be harmful. When all the dust and murkiness remain "bottled" inside all the time, it

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[1] The word *istirjāʿ* refers to saying: *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn.*

causes a withdrawal in one's temperament and the strength to fight the sorrow decreases. It would therefore be wise to occasionally speak about the sorrowful incident in the beginning in a balanced manner and within the limits of the Sharīʿah to a religious-minded well-wisher. This is also supported by Ahādīth. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* cried when his son, Hadrat Ibrāhīm, passed away and he said:

إنا بفراقك يا إبراهيم محزونون

O Ibrāhīm! We are saddened by your departure.

When showing your concern for another, ensure it is within the limit. The limit is that it must benefit the other without harming your own self. Thus, a rational concern is sufficient. A natural concern must be kept within the limit to the extent that it is needed for the rational concern to be effective. Do not allow it to go beyond this limit. If not, experience has shown that it too is harmful. Too much of concern and feeling sorry for another disturb the heart. Sometimes, this results in thoughts which are contradictory to accepting divine decree, and this is most dangerous.

(2) Do not go to extremes in abstaining from permissible occupations and do not opt for total solitude so that the heart is occupied in such things which would prevent fears of this nature from entering it. If a person wants to remove the air which is in a bottle, a simple way of doing it is to fill it with water. Air will neither remain inside nor will it be able to enter. The same applies to the heart. When the unseen [blessings of Allāh *taʿālā*] are not settled in it, lawful occupations act as shields against fears. It is common sense that the self cannot focus totally and equally on two things at the same time. However, it should be borne in mind that this does not include increasing one's love for these lawful occupations because love for them is also harmful. Mere organizational interactions and diversions are enough. For example, arrangements for one's livelihood, a little recreation, reading history books and so on.

(3) The best way of putting an end to intense and prolonged fears is to disregard them totally. Do not even turn your attention towards them. In fact, do not even turn to them with the intention of repulsing them. You should rather turn your attention to dhikr and occupy yourself in it. But here too, do not go to extremes in your attention to it and do not be

overenthusiastic. If you persist in doing this, you will get tired and bored and the fears will start taking a toll on you. After you commence your dhikr, do not wait to see if the fears disappeared or not because although you have focussed on one thing, if other thoughts enter unwittingly, they are not obstacles to your focus. There are many things in one's treasure of thoughts; they will certainly come before you.

This is similar to a person focusing on a single central dot which is surrounded by many other dots. Although he will see the other dots in his peripheral vision, his focus will remain on the single central dot."

The above were procedures to prevent the onset of intense and prolonged fears. But if such fears have already been experienced – as was the case with Hadrat Wālā – the procedures to put an end to them will be explained later on. We should rather complete the details concerning the present tribulation of Hadrat Wālā. These will be followed by the mysteries and wisdom of Allāh *ta'ālā* in causing this tribulation. And then – insha Allāh – we will write on the procedures to put an end to intense and prolonged fears. In following this sequence, we now present the remaining details of the incidents.

Hadrat Gangohī's Advice

We mentioned previously that it was a good coincidence that the tribulation commenced at the time of tahajjud when Hadrat Wālā was staying over in Gangoh. He therefore proceeded to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* the next morning and described his condition to him with a view to obtaining a treatment from him. Hadrat Maulānā advised him not to pay any attention to it.

Bouts Of Palpitation Of The Heart

Hadrat Wālā returned to Thānah Bhawan. The above-mentioned causes resulted in severe withdrawal symptoms in the heart. The fears therefore came to him again and again, and intensified by the day. This resulted in even more withdrawals, causing severe bouts of palpitation of the heart and Hadrat Wālā became extremely weak within a few days as though he had been ill for a very long time.

The Treatment Of Hakīm Muhammad Siddīq Gangohī

Hakīm Maulwī Muhammad Siddīq Gangohī had come from Garhī Pukhta to Thānah Bhawan. So Hadrat Wālā decided to obtain treatment from him. Maulwī Muhammad Yūnus Sāhib Marhūm who was a student and also murīd of Hadrat Wālā took a sample of Hadrat Wālā's urine to the Hakīm Sāhib. The moment he saw it, the Hakīm Sāhib said: "I am astonished at how this man is still alive. His urine clearly portrays that the natural heat of his body is totally finished. The Maulwī Sāhib returned to Hadrat Wālā and, in his naivety, conveyed the exact words of the Hakīm Sāhib to him. Hadrat Wālā scolded and reprimanded him for his foolishness and asked him: "Does a person ever say such things to a patient?! And that too when he is a heart patient?" The Maulwī Sāhib regretted his action and said: "I have certainly been foolish, but its already done, what can I do now?" Hadrat Wālā said: "Take this urine sample back and when you are still on your way to the Hakīm Sāhib, return without showing it to him. When you come back to me, you must tell me: "I took the urine sample again to the Hakīm Sāhib and he says that his previous diagnosis was wrong. The person whose urine sample you brought is very healthy and there is nothing to worry about."" The Maulwī Sāhib who was still like a student, objected: "Of what use will that be? You yourself are sending me and telling me to say all these things." Hadrat Wālā said: "That is of no concern to you. Just do as I am instructing you. Allāh *taʿālā* has placed a certain effect in words as well." The Maulwī Sāhib did as he was told and Hadrat Wālā certainly felt much better than the previous time when the Maulwī Sāhib had brought the bad news to him. The reason for this was that during those days, his heart had become extremely fragile and was affected by the smallest of things. And why should this not be the case when there is no illness as severe as illness of the heart.

Self-Prepared Treatment

When he did not experience any benefit from the Hakīm Sāhib's treatment, Hadrat Wālā decided to treat himself by going on a journey. He felt he ought to travel and go to meet his friends and relatives. As we had explained previously, Hadrat Wālā had realized that one of the causes of his distress was his excessive abstention from permissible actions. When Hadrat Wālā decided to undertake the journey, some of his close

associates went to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī and said: "We are benefiting tremendously from him. You must stop him from undertaking this journey." Hadrat Gangohī was fully aware of Hadrat Wālā's condition, so he said: "No. It would be best for him to go on a journey at present. He should certainly not be stopped."

Another measure which Hadrat Wālā adopted was that he borrowed a gun which he used to take to the open fields and fire it without aiming at any target. This also benefited him because the mere sound of the gun blast brought joy to his heart.

The Effect Of Hadrat Gangohī's Instruction

On one hand, Hadrat Wālā adopted these beneficial measures on the basis that he was a shaykh who was fully conversant with the ways of training and an expert in the emotions of one's disposition. On the other side, he also explained his situation to Hadrat Gangohī by writing to him and also by presenting himself before him. Hadrat Wālā relates: "From the very beginning until right at the end, Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī remained steadfast on this one instruction that I must not pay any attention to the fears. He continued emphasizing this point. This demonstrates the Maulānā's high level of instruction. In addition to this, he also paid particular attention to praying for me." Hadrat Wālā adds: "This one instruction of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī – do not pay any attention to your fears – is sufficient proof of his erudition in this field."

Extracts From Hadrat Gangohī's Letters

I now quote a few extracts from Hadrat Gangohī's letters which are connected to the above condition which was experienced by Hadrat Wālā.

First Letter

I received your letter which exposed your sentiments. If this fear and worry is with regard to the Hereafter, it is praiseworthy (this was essentially the case because if a person is naturally worried over a disliked matter, the reason for it can be nothing but love for Allāh *taʿālā*). The very same fear caused the elders to suffer from severe retraction to the extent that

some of them died in the process. Hadrat Shaykh says in this regard:

> Friends lost their lives out of remorse that the heavens placed dust on their heads.

Such a condition is therefore a cause of gratitude and not of worry. The same worry caused Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* to remain worried and grief-stricken for ten years in Bayt al-Maqdis because the physicians could not treat him. Eventually a Jewish physician checked him and diagnosed that he does not have any physical ailment. Rather, it is fear of the Hereafter for which there is no treatment.

Glad tidings over the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* blessed you with this fortune. Thousands of joys can be sacrificed for a worry of this nature, and death in such a condition is the greatest martyrdom.

If the fear is because of some other matter, I cannot provide an answer without first asking you about the actual situation. You asked me about coming here. As per the saying: How can a lost person be a guide? Despite this, if you were to come here, I myself expect it to be beneficial because companionship of the righteous is always a boon. That is all. Peace be to you.

Second Letter

I gauged your condition from your letter. I am praying for your wellbeing…the whisperings and fear of an evil death are also mere imaginations. You must continue repulsing them as much as you can. Rewards and atonement of sins are also certain, if Allāh *taʿālā* wills…15 Shaʿbān 1316 A.H.

Glad Tidings From Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

In addition to reverting to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī, Hadrat Wālā continued apprising Hadrat Hājī Sāhib of his conditions and he received instructions, glad tidings and prayers from him. He writes in letter no. 44, dated 1 Rajab 1316 A.H.: "All praise is due to Allāh, the condition of your heart is excellent. This is the station of fear and hope. It is referred to as *haybat wa uns*. Sometimes one overpowers the other, but both should be considered to be the same.

He writes in letter no. 45, dated 19 Rajab 1316 A.H.: I received your second letter as well. I wrote the answer in your first

letter. I repeat: Your spiritual condition is excellent. Inshā Allāh you will not be harmed. I am praying…when you experience anything in your heart, consider it to be from Allāh *taʿālā*. Those that are harmful will be repulsed by this meditation.

He writes in letter no. 46 dated 8 Shaʿbān 1316 A.H.: Your spiritual condition is excellent. I mentioned this previously…Pitfalls of this nature are normally experienced by a seeker. Inshā Allāh you will pass them all. I am praying for you (surely He is all-hearing, most near).

He writes in letter no. 47, dated 22 Shawwāl 1316 A.H.: Māshā Allāh your spiritual condition is excellent. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless you in it. Whatever little reservation remains will also be removed. I am praying to Allāh *taʿālā* to include you among His devoted and sincere servants.

He also praised his condition in letter no. 48, dated 14 Dhū al-Hijjah 1316 A.H. He then writes in letter no. 49, dated 15 Muharram 1316 A.H.: All praise is due to Allāh your condition is now excellent. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to bless you with progress.

It is gauged from the dates of the incidents and letters that Hadrat Wālā experienced this fear for about a year. It could be referred to as his year of grief during his era of treading the path of Sufism.

The Tribulation Intensifies

No one apart from Hadrat Wālā himself can correctly gauge the severity of his condition. The following couplets apply:

> The dark night, the dangerous waves and the whirlpool which engulfed me. How can the person who is sitting comfortably on the shore know about my situation?
>
> O you whose feet have never been pricked by a thorn! What do you know of the condition of those lions who bear the swords of calamities over their heads?

A seeker wrote to Hadrat Wālā with a lengthy description of his intense spiritual worries. Hadrat Wālā replied to his letter which is quoted in *al-Ibtilā' li Ahl al-Istifā'*. He writes therein: "The constrictions, calamities, trials and tribulations which you

described are not even one percent of what is experienced by some people. At present, I recall the conditions of some people [Hadrat Wālā is referring to himself]. These conditions have shaken me from head to toe. It was extremely difficult for me to control myself and not stop myself from writing this reply to you…(quoted from the introduction to *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*). This letter is dated 18 Muharram 1332 A.H. i.e. fifteen years after the expiry of the overpowering fear which Hadrat Wālā had experienced. Merely thinking about it caused him to tremble from head to toe. The reader can gauge from this that if merely recalling his spiritual condition after a lengthy period of fifteen years could have such an effect on him, what he must have been going through during the period when he was in the midst of it?

In short, the condition which we are describing was a very severe and critical condition. It could have only been borne by a magnanimous and firm in īmān personality like Hadrat Wālā through the help of Allāh *taʿālā* and the attention of pious elders. Had it been anyone else, he would have lost his senses and certainly lost his īmān or life, or both in the process. I myself am aware of the conditions of some people who went through such dangerous stages that had they not recovered quickly through Allāh's grace and Hadrat Wālā's blessings, they would have been rendered absolutely useless, both in religion and in worldly matters. They had been reduced far beyond both the worlds, whereas, as per the statement of Hadrat Wālā their condition was not even one percent of the condition which he had to go through.

A Statement Of Hadrat Hājī Sayyid Muhammad 'Ābid

Hadrat Wālā's humility and genuine quest are also worthy of thousands of praises. Although he himself was a spiritual master, he never considered himself independent of the elders. Whenever the need arose, he did not hesitate in the least to consult not only his shaykh, but even the senior khulafā' of his shaykh and to present his case to them. In addition to describing his condition to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu*, he described it to Hadrat Hājī Sayyid Muhammad ʿĀbid Deobandī *rahimahullāh* who was a khalīfah of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. On hearing his condition, Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib consoled him and said: "You must think to yourself that these fears are not entering your heart but leaving it. When a thief gets into a

house in order to steal, his eyes are still focused on the door. If he starts to flee after hearing the house people waking up, he is seen at the door.” After relating this statement, Hadrat Wālā says: “I had always considered Hājī Muhammad ʿĀbid Sāhib to be a pious elder, but the truth of the matter is that I did not consider him to be a shaykh and spiritual mentor of such a level. But after hearing this statement, I realized he was a shaykh and erudite mentor as well.”

Obstacles On The Path Are Crossed

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the attention, procedures and prayers of the pious elders, Hadrat Wālā crossed this difficult and final valley in the path of Sufism. Look at the wonderful coincidence: Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had given him the glad tidings: “Inshā Allāh you will cross all the valleys.” This was realized while Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was still alive. The latter passed away a few months after Hadrat Wālā came out of this tribulation. It was as though he enabled Hadrat Wālā to cross all the valleys in his very presence and the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz Shirāzī applied to him:

> Those long nights of worry and the sorrow of the heart finally came to an end in the shadow of the hair-locks of the beloved.

Two Odes Of Hāfiz Shīrāzī

At this point, I recall two odes of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*. The first is appropriate to Hadrat Wālā’s condition of tribulation, and the second to his condition of peace. Both are quoted here because of their aptness.

The First Ode

> My life is leaving me but my objective is not being fulfilled by you. O my kismet is not getting up from its sleep.
>
> Look at the face of my beloved who can repair the condition of the heart. You will not be able to accomplish anything in any other way.
>
> How unfortunate that my dear life passed by with these thoughts that the affliction of your black hair-locks is not coming to an end.

I am dying with this regret in the soil of your threshold because I cannot see the water which would give me life.

Many episodes of the heart are connected to the morning breeze, but as luck would have it, the night too did not arrive today.

As long as I do not pluck fruit from your tall stature, fruits will not bear on the tree of my objective.

The heart which harboured good hopes in your hair-locks has now settled down in one place. Now there is no news about the traveller who has fallen in this calamity.

My morning arrow never missed its mark. What has happened now that not even a single one is hitting its target?!

This is why the heart of Hāfiz has come to detest everyone. Now it cannot leave the circle of your hair-lock.

The Second Ode

The days and nights of separation from the beloved have come to an end. I took this good omen out of it that ʿīd has passed and the task has been completed.

All that coquetry and luxury which were decaying eventually came to an end at the feet of the spring breeze.

After obtaining this light, we are taking our hearts out of the world because we have reached the sun and soil is finished.

Those long nights of worry and the sorrow of the heart finally came to an end in the shadow of the hair-locks of the beloved.

O cup-bearer! May you live long and may your cup remain filled with drink because it was through your efforts that my sorrow and intoxication ended.

All thanks are due to Allāh that through the appearance of the flower buds, the haughtiness of

the autumn wind and the awe of the thorns have ended.

Say to the morning of hope which had been hiding behind the veil of seclusion to come out so that the work of the dark night may come to an end.

Although the worry of my work was because of your hair-locks, this knot too was untied by the face of the beloved.

Although no one thought anything of Hāfiz, all thanks over the fact that the limitless and countless hardships came to an end.

Hadrat Wālā Stops Bay'ah And Instruction

During the period when Hadrat Wālā was experiencing these fearful conditions, he stopped accepting bay'ah from anyone, and paused all instruction and training. He was fully occupied in his own concerns by day and night, where did he have the time and awareness to see to others? The seekers would persist but he would excuse himself. His integrity imposed on him to clearly say to them: "It would be most unproductive for you to revert to me because I myself am caught up in my own grief." Despite this, a person in Bareilly insisted and although Hadrat Wālā warned him that he will not benefit in any way, he persisted and pledged bay'ah to Hadrat Wālā. But as Hadrat Wālā had said, no changes took place in the person's condition; and Hadrat Wālā's prediction that he will not benefit in any way proved absolutely correct.

Hadrat Wālā's Personal Description Of His Fear

I related the necessary incidents related to Hadrat Wālā's internal spiritual condition, viz. the overpowering fear which he experienced. I now quote the exact words of Hadrat Wālā himself which he wrote briefly in his book, *Yād Yārān* under the section on Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī's favours to him.

The second favour is connected to my internal self. If I have to go into details, I will have to expose certain secrets. Furthermore, the story is extremely terrifying and unpleasant. I will therefore suffice with a brief description. Because of my evil deeds and many acts of disobedience (these bad thoughts are themselves worthy of emulation – author), I experienced a

severe condition. Although I was physically sound, I became despondent with life and gave preference to death thousands of times over life. I cannot describe it in any other way:

> Majnūn's life has a double calamity and pain. One is at the time when separation from Laylā commences and the other is at the time of her death.

It was during this period when Hadrat [Gangohī] *quddisa sirruhu* turned his special attention to me with prayers, instruction and encouragement; enabling me to maintain my senses and giving life to my life. I then perceived the benefits of this condition and of its departure. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. I will never forget these two favours[1] [of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*]. The one who is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Retraction And Fear Are Replaced By Expansion And Affinity

I [the author] present the following couplets of Hadrat Shīrāzī with absolute respect and joy to my Hadrat Wālā as a way of congratulation.

> O Hāfiz! The night of separation has passed and I am getting the fragrance of the morning. O you mad lover! Congratulations on your happiness.
>
> The treasure of meeting has arrived, the pain of separation has passed. The time has come once again for the kingdom of the heart to inhabit itself.

The intense and prolonged tribulation which was detailed above was the most difficult and final valley in Hadrat Wālā's spiritual path. He crossed it by the help of Allāh *taʿālā* and the attention of his elders, and was once again honoured with spiritual tranquillity and internal clarity. His previous condition of expansion, affinity, enthusiasm and yearning returned to him.

> My water has returned to my river. My master has returned to my alley.
>
> O doctor! I have become mad once again. O beloved! I have become crazy once again.

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[1] The first favour was with regard to external knowledge which was quoted previously in the appropriate chapter.

The expansion and affinity which came after the intense and prolonged tribulation were – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – unique, never ending, and forever progressing. The clarity and tranquillity which were acquired were most firmly embedded and on the increase. Based on this excellent conclusion, Hadrat Wālā's severe tribulation proved to be a manifestation of the following couplet of Hadrat ʿIrāqī:

> That pain is very good if you are its cure. That path is excellent if you are its end.

Addendum: An Explanation Of Stability And Firmness

I consider it necessary to explain the condition of stability and firmness. The Sufis refer to it as a *maqām*. The explanation of this condition is essential so that no misunderstanding may occur. When a seeker reaches the state of *maqām*, it does not mean that he does not experience changes in his condition at all. According to Hadrat Wālā, temporary changes are from among the essentials of Sufis. Even after total and perfect stability and firmness are acquired, the seekers experience changes in their conditions. However, there is no intensity, continuation and transgression in them. For example, after a person acquires total physical health and a balance in his disposition, he still experiences certain ailments due to changes in the weather or other external factors. Sometimes he catches a cold, sometimes he feels weary, and sometimes he even experiences a fever. However, temporary ailments of this nature do not negate his normal healthy state. In short, the major condition is considered. If the effects of *maqām* are overriding in a seeker, we will say he is a man of *maqām*. Occasionally he will experience certain conditions. But if the conditions overwhelm him, we will say he is a man of conditions [and not a man of *maqām*] even though he may occasionally display the effects of *maqām*. Like the person of sound disposition in whom the effects of good health are overriding, but he experiences a lapse occasionally. As for the person in whom the effects of illness are overriding, we will say that he is a sick man even though he may experience occasional recovery.

In short, the spiritual masters are occasionally overcome by conditions but this does not negate their mastery. In fact, even the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are occasionally overcome by conditions but in accordance with their rank. For example,

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – the chief and leader of the Prophets – cried to and beseeched Allāh *taʿālā* before the Battle of Badr. This stemmed from a condition which overpowered him. It is related that angels also experience such overriding conditions although they do not have human emotions. A narration of *Tirmidhī* states that Jibrīl *ʿalayhis salām* stuffed mud into the mouth of Pharaoh. It should be borne in mind that when a man of *maqām* is overpowered by a condition, he does not step out of the bounds as opposed to a man of conditions. The latter sometimes steps out of the bounds, but a sin is not recorded against him because he was overcome by his condition.

Spiritual Ecstasy is Sometimes Experienced After Stability

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā never experienced such an intense and prolonged retraction after that. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he developed a stable and firm internal spiritual condition. However, as per the above explanation, how could he avoid certain temporary changes? After all, they are normal essentials of the spiritual path. Even after a seeker becomes a man of *maqām*, he is bound to experience certain conditions occasionally. Most of them do not manifest themselves, but you do get a few which come out into the open.

I heard of one incident from reliable sources about how Hadrat Wālā was indeed overcome by his condition. This happened just a few years ago in the musjid of the Khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan. Hadrat Wālā was delivering a talk and quoted the following couplets from *Mathnawī Sharīf* with full force and emotion:

> O enemies! The friends have sealed off all the roads.
> I am a lame buck while the hunter is a lion.
>
> What escape do I have apart from submission and acceptance of divine decree? After all, even a defeated warrior is at the mercy of the lion.

Hadrat Wālā just finished quoting the second couplet when he was overcome by spiritual ecstasy and a scream emanated unwittingly from him. He remained trembling for quite some time and caused the audience to tremble as well. It was absolutely clear from the topic on which he was speaking and from the prevailing situation that this condition was caused by

an overpowering fear. The return of this condition was like an affirmation of the following couplet:

> I am singing a worrisome tune once again, and igniting a fire among the nightingales.

What a powerful condition this must have been that it caused a mountain of stability like Hadrat Wālā to tremble in this way! Why should this not be the case? Even a man of *maqām* has a limit to patience and fortitude. When a powerful condition which is beyond this limit overpowers him, he becomes overpowered immediately. At the same time, he overpowers it soon thereafter. The condition is not able to continue for a long time nor can it be too intense. If such a powerful condition had to overpower a person who is not of *maqām*, he may well lose his life in the process. In short, such overpowering conditions do not negate stability. In fact, they themselves could be referred to as levels of stability.

> This madness which you are seeing together with this beauty can be tolerated. O well-wisher! Do not scold this impatient one.

Anyway, the above incident presented an overpowering condition which was exposed to those who were present. In addition to it, many other subtle conditions are continually experienced. They are strong and powerful in themselves, but because of the strong forbearance and stability of the person on whom they descend, they do not manifest themselves as overpowering conditions. These subtle spiritual conditions are certainly not concealed from a man of insight. The effects of fear [of Allāh *taʿālā*] manifest themselves very often on Hadrat Wālā, and any person with the slightest affinity with Sufism can perceive them easily. A few examples in this regard will be provided under the discussion on the wisdom behind retraction and fear. These examples will serve as proofs for what I am saying at present. Hadrat Wālā's elevated excellences and lofty conditions are so open and manifest that a man of insight, equity and moderation will never need such proofs. Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī says:

> Proof of the sun is the sun itself. If you are searching for a proof, do not turn your face away from it.

However,

You must divest your mind of rejecting the beloved
so that you can get a fragrance from the rose garden
of the beloved.

Difference Between a Man of Maqām And One of Spiritual Conditions

I now conclude this addendum with a very clear example which displays the difference in states between a man of *maqām* and one of spiritual conditions. This was related by Hadrat Wālā on one occasion. Hadrat Wālā was drawing hot water from the Khānqāh bathroom in order to perform ablution. Steam escaped from the utensil when he removed the lid. The fire was burning from beneath the utensil and its smoke also rose up. This caused discomfort to his eyes. He immediately said: "A man of *maqām* also experiences conditions, but they are very subtle like this steam, because they [conditions] are spiritual. On the other hand, the conditions of a man of conditions are from the self, this is why they have a burning nature like this smoke.

Returning to The Previous Topic

The severe tribulation which Hadrat Wālā had to go through which, according to the Sufis is known *haybah*, is the highest form of retraction which is experienced only by those on the highest level of spirituality. We provided details in this regard by the help of Allāh *ta'ālā*. All praise is due to Him. A few Qur'ānic verses, Ahādīth and poems of the true lovers of Allāh *ta'ālā* are now quoted to show that in most conditions, the retraction and tribulation which are experienced are from among the essentials of Sufism.

Qur'ānic verses

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِيْ كَبَدٍ

We certainly created man into toil.[1]

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوْعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ

We will most certainly test you through a little fear, hunger and loss in riches, lives and fruits.[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Balad, 90: 4.
[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 155.

Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* conveys the essence of the above verse as follows:

> O you brave man! Allāh *ta'ālā* casts pain, discomfort and calamity on our bodies.
>
> Fear, hunger, loss in wealth, loss in body – all these are sent to demonstrate the essence of one's life.

اَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ اَنْ يُّتْرَكُوْا اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا اٰمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُوْنَ

Do people think that they will be left alone by merely saying: "We believe," and that they will not be tested?[1]

اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَاْتِكُمْ مَّثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ؕ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَاْسَآءُ وَالضَّرَّآءُ وَزُلْزِلُوْا حَتّٰى يَقُوْلَ الرَّسُوْلُ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهُ مَتٰى نَصْرُ اللهِ ؕ اَلَآ اِنَّ نَصْرَ اللهِ قَرِيْبٌ.

Do you think you will go into Paradise while you have not experienced the circumstances like those of the people who passed before you? Misfortune and hardship befell them and they were shaken to the extent that the Messenger and those who believed with him began saying: "When will the help of Allāh come?" Listen! The help of Allāh is near.[2]

اِذْ جَآؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَاِذْ زَاغَتِ الْاَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوْبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ بِاللهِ الظُّنُوْنَا، هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَزُلْزِلُوْا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيْدًا.

When they came upon you from above and from below, when the eyes became distracted and the hearts came up to the throats, and you thought all manner of thoughts about Allāh. There and then the believers were tried and they were severely shaken.[3]

وَنَبْلُوْكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً (في الجلالين كفقر وغنى، وسقم وصحة، وفي جامع البيان بالمصائب تارة وبالنعم أخرى).

We test you through evil and good by way of trial.[4] Jalālayn *states: Like poverty and affluence, illness and good health.* Jāmi' al-Bayān *states: With calamities sometimes and bounties at other times.*

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[1] Sūrah al-'Ankabūt, 29: 2.
[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 214.
[3] Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 10-11.
[4] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 35.

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها في حديث طويل قصة فترة الوحي، زاد البخاري حزن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيما بلغنا حزنا غدا منه مرارا كي يتردى من رؤس سواهق الجبل، فكلما أوفي بذروة جبل لكي يلقي نفسه منه تبدي له جبرئيل فقال يا محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، إنك رسول الله حقا، فيسكن كذالك جاشه وتقر نفسه.

In a lengthy Hadīth, ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā *describes the period when divine revelation had stopped coming to Rasūlullāh* sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Al-Bukhārī adds: Rasūlullāh* sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *became deeply worried and tried several times to throw himself from the tops of the mountain. Each time he climbed a peak in order to fling himself down from it, Jibrīl would appear and say: "O Muhammad! You are most certainly a Messenger of Allāh. This would settle his mind and provide solace to him.*

Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* describes the above condition in the following couplets:

> When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was troubled by the anxiety of separation, he tried to throw himself from a mountain.
>
> Jibrīl said to him: Do not do that. You have received the treasure [of prophet-hood] by Allāh's command.
>
> Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* restrained himself from throwing himself. The pain of separation began tormenting him again.
>
> He was overcome by grief and pain and tried to throw himself off a mountain again.
>
> Jibrīl appeared once again and said: Do not do this, you have received a unique kingdom.
>
> His condition remained in this way until the concealed was made clear to him and he acquired the reality from his Beloved [Allāh].
>
> He beats himself because of each difficulty. When he beats himself like this, it is the foundation for all difficulties.

O you lazy fellow! You ought to sacrifice yourself for the task for which he sacrificed himself.

A noble person sacrifices himself several times for it because dying in this path entails hundreds of lives.

عن سعد قال سئل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أي الناس أشد بلاء، قال الأنبياء ثم الأمثل فالأمثل، يبتلى الرجل على حسب دينه، فإن كان في دينه صلبا اشتد بلاءه.

Saʿd raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu *said: Rasūlullāh* s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *was asked: "Which people experience the worst tribulations?" He replied: "The Prophets, then those who are closest to them followed by those who are closest to them. A person is tested according to the level of his religiosity. If he is firm in his religion, his tribulation is severe."*

Maulānā Rūmī *rah̲imahullāh* said in this regard:

The tribulations which were borne by the Prophets were as if they spread their heads on the seven heavens.

وإن كان في دينه رقة هون عليه، فما زال كذلك حتى يمشي على الأرض ما له ذنب. رواه الترمذي، وابن ماجه، والدارمي.

If he is lax in his religion, it is made easy for him. He remains like that until he walks on earth without any sin on him.[1]

Sayings of True Lovers of Allāh

The following are by Shīrāzī *rah̲imahullāh*:

The twist in your hair-lock has caused a disturbance in every circle. The sorcery of your eyes has caused sick people to be found lying around in every corner.

In the beginning it feels easy to acquire love and intoxication. But I eventually burnt myself traversing these stations.

O cup-bearer! Listen! Swirl the goblet and hold it firmly because love appears easy in the beginning but there are many difficulties in its path.

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[1] Narrated by Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Dāramī.

> The pain of love is such that the more you try to treat it, the worse it becomes.
>
> The ocean of love is a shore-less ocean. There is nothing you can do apart from giving your life to it.
>
> Once you start casting lives in the chamber of calamities, you will continue casting. Once you start flinging the hearts with amber-like hair-locks, you will continue doing so.
>
> You need a lot of capital for a lover's shop. You will need a heart like fire and eyes like a flowing river.
>
> There is nothing apart from lightning in the quest for love. It will not be surprising if this quest burns an entire farm.
>
> When any bird falls in love with the grief of the heart, the effects of happiness will never be seen on the cheeks of its life.
>
> You will face dangers to your life on the path to the house of Laylā. The prerequisite for taking the first step to her house is that you will have to be Majnūn.
>
> As long as thousands of thorns do not sprout forth from the ground, you will not find a garden and flowers coming forth from any piece of ground.
>
> It is wrong to expect peace and comfort on the path to love. The heart which desires a bandage for the pain will find the heart forever wounded.
>
> There is no place on the alley of intoxication for the haughty ones and those who are fully occupied. This alley needs travellers who have forsaken the world. It does not need those who are not firm and those who have no grief.
>
> Whoever you see, you see him grief-stricken in your love. I have not come across any heart which has not fallen ill out of your love.

The following couplet is by Hadrat 'Irāqī *rahimahullāh*:

> All the pains and tribulations in the world were brought together and named "love".

The following are by Nawāb Mustafā Khān Sāhib Sheftah *rahimahullāh*:

> It is the ember which melts the life and the lightning which burns the luminous face. Yes, do not think it is easy to live in love.
>
> There is no person in this desolateness who has not been disgraced. There is no nightingale in the garden which is not caught up in love.
>
> You are very relaxed and satisfied, yet you are desirous of [Allāh's] manifestation!? This lightning cannot be acquired by anyone except the one with a pining heart.
>
> It is not easy to reach the friend before love. First the soul will have to be separated from the body and then the body will have to be separated from the soul.

The following couplet is by Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*:

> The truthful ones lost their lives out of remorse that the heavens placed the ground on their heads.

The following couplet is by Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*

> An old man was going around in the alleys and making this announcement: "Love is most unconcerned. You must be cautious."

The following couplet is written by Hadrat Jāmī *rahimahullāh*:

> The corner of peace is not suitable for love. The humiliation of the alley of ridicule is better for it.

Miscellaneous:

> We nurtured the enemy and killed the friend. No one is permitted to raise any objections against our decision.
>
> As long as a person is not tried and tested to the full, we do not include his name among the true friends [of Allāh *taʿālā*].
>
> This tribulation is a pearl from our treasures. We do not give our pearl to anyone.

The Wisdom Behind Retraction And Fear

As I had promised, I now present some of the wisdoms of this lofty condition of retraction and fear. It is presented to the seekers, especially those who are experiencing this tribulation. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā*.

There are three parts to this section. Inshā Allāh, the first part will contain the wisdoms which were clearly observed from Hadrat Wālā's collective conditions. The second section will contain quotations of wisdoms from Hadrat Wālā's writings. The third section will contain wisdoms found in the Qur'ān, Ahādīth and statements of people.

A Tribulation In Appearance, A Mercy In Reality

First Section

Hadrat Wālā's internal tribulation was an expression of Allāh's declaration: "It may well be that you dislike something while it is good for you." It was thus a tribulation in appearance but a fountain of Allāh's mercy in reality. In addition to embracing vast internal progress for Hadrat Wālā himself, it concealed countless general religious benefits for the seekers. At the time, Hadrat Wālā was extremely worried by this sudden tribulation and did not know what calamity he was caught up in. He did not know that life-giving waves were striking in this gloomy darkness, and that the grief and worry which were beating his heart from all sides were really harbingers for the descent of divine mercy. Detailed knowledge of the specific internal progress which he acquired from this tribulation cannot be fathomed by anyone. After all:

> There are such secrets between the lover and the beloved that even the angels who are appointed to record a person's deeds are not aware of them.
>
> Now who has the courage to ask the owner of the garden what the nightingale said, what the flowers heard, and what the morning breeze said?

Firmness in The Station of Servitude

However, all the people of the path know this much that the highest station in Sufism is the station of servitude. They also accept the fact that when a person remains firm and steadfast during such an intense and prolonged state of retraction – as

was the case with Hadrat Wālā – then the seeker becomes extremely firm and resolute in the station of servitude by the help of Allāh *taʿālā*. The reason for this is that after he witnesses the grand workings of the Real Doer [Allāh *taʿālā*] within his self, his own insignificance and absolute unimportance become totally clear to him. By virtue of observing his own incapability, he reaches perfect servitude which is really the last station of spiritual progress.

Bearing in mind that he had personally experienced the changes in the condition of his heart, when he is no longer in that state of fear, he still trembles at and fears Allāh's power and might, and is in awe of divine will and divine decree. Even when he perceives the most excellent internal conditions, he does not have even a whispering of pride and arrogance. Based on his previous experience, he considers this condition to be merely a gift from Allāh *taʿālā* at present, and has full conviction that he is under the control of Allāh *taʿālā* for the future as well. In short, consciousness of Allāh's might becomes his continuous condition, absolute respect and deference for Allāh *taʿālā* becomes its natural demand, and full surrender and total obliteration become the salient features of his life. Alternatively, we could say that complete servitude becomes his essential quality, and submission and resignation become second nature to him.

Any ordinary insightful person can gauge these pre-eminent qualities to the highest degree in Hadrat Wālā merely by observing his conditions, reading his books, and listening to his statements and instructions. They are as clear as the day; there is no need to explain them. After all, how can you explain something which is so clearly observed? And why should there even be a need to explain it!?

Considering Himself To Be Insignificant

Nevertheless, a few incidents are presented to serve as examples.

On countless occasions we heard Hadrat Wālā taking an oath and saying: "I neither consider myself better than any Muslim nor better than those Muslims whom people label as flagrant sinners and wicked at present. Based on what could happen in the future, I do not even consider myself to be better than the unbelievers. I never have any thoughts of attaining ranks in the

Hereafter because these will be attained by great people. If I merely get a place in the shoes of the inhabitants of Paradise, it will be a great mercy from Allāh *taʿālā*. I do not have the desire for anything more. This desire too which I have is not because I feel I am eligible for it, but because I cannot bear the punishment of the Hell-fire. When I scold and reprimand people for the sake of their rectification, I have the following example in my mind: A prince committed a crime and an ordinary sweeper or executioner is commanded by the king to lash the prince. When the executioner is lashing the prince, will he even think to himself for the slightest moment that he is superior to the prince?"

"In short, no matter how sinful a believer is, I never look down on him. Instead, I immediately think of this example: If a beautiful woman rubs soot on her face, the person who knows her will dislike the soot but will still consider the beautiful woman to be beautiful. He will think to himself: Once she washes her face with soap, it will appear like the moon once again. In other words, I only detest the action, not the doer of the action."

No Deed Is Worthy Of Consideration In Allāh's Court

On one occasion I quoted a statement of a virtuous associate of Hadrat Wālā to Hadrat Wālā. This associate had said: "In the Hereafter I will not be able to present any deed which was done sincerely." Hadrat Wālā was replying to a letter at the time. The moment he heard me quoting this statement, he stopped. Clear signs of shame and remorse appeared on his face, and he lowered his head in his overwhelming servitude. After remaining silent in this way for some time, he said in a tone filled with remorse: "Indeed, what worthy deed is there which can be presented in Allāh's court?"

Fearing Doubts Of Pride

He said on one occasion: "When I refuse to accept a gift, then although I refuse because of a valid reason, I become very afraid because when I ponder over it, I have some doubts of pride. This causes me intense fear. May Allāh *taʿālā* pardon me. It is extremely difficult to differentiate between independence and pride. The two are very similar. Sometimes we are deluded and what we consider to be independence is actually pride. A person can only be protected from this if Allāh

taʿālā protects him. Apart from this, all our words, actions, situations and conditions are full of dangers. No condition is devoid of danger. Nowadays I think a lot of this couplet which I had read at some time in my childhood:

> I am not saying You must accept my worship. All I am begging for is that You draw Your pen of forgiveness over my sins.

In fact, in the light of what Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "The deeds which we did when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was alive must be accepted. And if we are not taken to task for those which we did after his demise, that will be a great boon for us." We do not have any ambitions of reward. Let alone our sins, it will be a boon if Allāh *taʿālā* were to pardon us for the shortcomings in our acts of obedience because what we consider to be acts of obedience are not even worthy of being termed as such. For example, a person is waving a hand-fan or rendering some other service in a slapdash manner. He may feel very happy over the fact that he is rendering a service whereas it is a cause of severe discomfort. However, we do not stop him from rendering that service solely because we do not want to offend him. The same is with our acts of worship. A person should not think that he spent an entire hour in Allāh's remembrance because he does not know whether he will be taken to account for it or not. I say with regard to such acts of worship: It will be a real boon if we are not taken to task for them. The high ranks can be aspired for by those who enjoy high ranks. As for me, I beseech and beg Allāh *taʿālā* to save me from punishment and to give me just one place among the shoes of Paradise.[1]

A Reply To A Chief's Letter

A high-ranking relative of a respectable chief suddenly fell ill with severe pneumonia. All the other relatives became extremely worried because they did not have any hopes for his survival. The chief sent a telegram to Hadrat Wālā requesting him to pray for his relative's recovery. Hadrat Wālā prayed for him and, by Allāh's grace, contrary to expectations, he recovered completely. Even the doctors were left astounded. The chief wrote to Hadrat Wālā: "Allāh *taʿālā* accepted Hadrat's

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[1] *Husn al-ʿAzīz*, vol. 1, statement number 98.

prayer and saved us from a calamity. I sent Hadrat Wālā the telegram when I had become extremely terrified. Like the proverb: The destination of the judge is the musjid.[1]

He also wrote the same thing to me, i.e. The destination of the judge is the musjid. When we are afflicted by any difficulty, we burden Hadrat Wālā to pray for us. By Allāh's grace, we are always successful in this regard. Hadrat Wālā commented on his statement with genuine humility and in a very subtle way by writing to him: "Yes, but the musjid is without a roof. One can neither protect himself from the cold, sunlight nor the rain. However, our associates open their umbrellas and stand there. Yet, it is referred to as a musjid. That umbrella is your love and noble thoughts (by virtue of which Allāh *taʿālā* showers His grace)."

Do Not Be Proud Over Any Condition

In the course of one of his conversations, Hadrat Wālā made a very emotional statement in a subdued tone. He said: "One can neither rely on one's knowledge, actions, conditions nor station. Nothing can be relied on. In fact, one cannot even rely on the most essential element, viz. the continuance of one's īmān. Divine decree and will are all tightly bound. We do not know what is destined for whom. Very often a person knows a particular action to be a sin and knows that it is within his control to abstain from it, but is still caught up in it and causes himself to be caught up in it by his own choice. Who is it who is pushing him forward? Furthermore, it is traditionally and rationally imperative not to believe in the concept of fatalism.

This is a very delicate issue and also a terrifying station. No matter how good a condition you may be experiencing, never be proud over it. No matter how bad a condition you see in another, never castigate him. You have no guarantee that your condition may become worse than his. How can we ever have pride over anything when our knowledge, deeds, conditions and station are all under Allāh's control?

مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا، وَمَا يُمْسِكْ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ

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[1] In other words, the musjid is the furthest place which the judge refers to at the hour of need.

Whatever of mercy Allāh opens up for the people, none can withhold it. And whatever He withholds, none can bestow apart from Him.[1]

Hadrat Wālā said in a subdued tone on one occasion: "Like a matchstick, all vile elements are found in the self. It is just the striking [of the matchstick] which is left. It remains safeguarded for as long as Allāh *ta'ālā* saves it from striking. He did not save Pharaoh and Hāmān, so that element was ignited in them. A person can only be protected if Allāh *ta'ālā* protects him. Maulānā Rūmi *rahimahullāh* says:

> The sole sickness of Satan was that he considered himself to be superior. This sickness is found in every creation.

When Hadrat Wālā speaks about the baseless beliefs of deviated sects, he spontaneously beseeches and begs Allāh *ta'ālā* with genuine humility and says: "O Allāh! Save us from Your wrath. O Allāh! Save us from Your wrath." He adds: "When Allāh's wrath falls, even false things appear to be the truth, and baseless premises take on the form of truths and facts."

When Shaking Hands With People

A large crowd of people was waiting anxiously to shake hands with Hadrat Wālā after the last Jumu'ah salāh of the Ramadān of 1353 A.H. Instead of allowing them to shake hands with him the moment he gets up from his place, he stopped all of them. He said: "I will not shake hands with anyone until I proceed and sit near the pond." He did this because he feared he might fall down due to the large crowd and his old age. He proceeded towards the pond by having two persons on either side of him who were holding each of his hands. If, while walking, anyone came to shake hands with him, he would say: "Both my hands are restrained at the moment. If you want to shake hands with me, you should rather shake the hands of these two in whose hands are my hands. I will only shake hands after I sit near the pond." He then sat at the pond and continued shaking hands with the people for quite a long time. When he finished, he went to his sitting place and said: "By Allāh, I consider it a great honour that a worthless person like myself has so many

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[1] Sūrah Fātir, 35: 2.

Muslims who love him. At the same time, I dislike disorderliness. Had I not made this arrangement, people would have rushed from all sides and I could have fallen due to my old age. By making this arrangement, I was able to shake hands with everyone with total ease. I shook hands with them with the intention that there must certainly be at least one accepted and pardoned servant of Allāh *taʿālā* from among them. Allāh forbid, all of them could not have earned Allāh's wrath and all of them could not be the inmates of Hell. If just one person from them earned Allāh's mercy and he sees me burning in the Hell-fire, will he not feel mercy towards me? Will he not intercede on my behalf before Allāh *taʿālā* and have me removed from Hell?"

I Have No Merit

Hadrat Wālā said on countless occasions: "All the simple and beneficial ways of rectifying the self which Allāh *taʿālā* instils in my mind are solely through the blessings of the seekers; it is not my achievement. Allāh *taʿālā* willed for His servants to be rectified and for them to derive benefit. He is therefore taking this service from a worthless person like me. Anyone who has any pride over his knowledge and understanding must separate himself from the seekers and see how he is totally overturned. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* gave him this knowledge and understanding for the benefit of others."

"A mother cannot be proud over the fact that she breastfeeds her child. Rather, it was Allāh's will for the child to be reared. This is why He produced milk from flesh. The milk which gushes forth from the breasts is through the blessings of the infant's sucking action. If a mother stops breastfeeding her child, the milk will dry up. Similarly, if water is not drawn from a well, it will not get filled with new water. In short, if a shaykh stops conveying [his knowledge and understanding], he will stop receiving."

Neither Knowledge Nor Action

There was a scholar who was in search of a shaykh. Hadrat Wālā was displeased with him because he was self-opinionated. Hadrat Wālā said to him: "I am standing here in a musjid and assuring you that the day you pledge bayʿah to any of our elders and inform me about it, then inshā Allāh, whatever ill-feeling I have towards you will disappear immediately. I will

then consider you to be my friend, and myself to be your servant. But don't even think of having your objectives fulfilled here because I am totally unqualified to steer a knowledgeable person like you. If you wish, I can take an oath on this."[1]

Hadrat Wālā made a statement which is appropriate to the above condition. He said: "I neither possess knowledge, deeds nor any achievements. However, all praise is due to Allāh I have full conviction about my own emptiness. It is enough for me if Allāh *taʿālā* showers His grace on me solely on this."

Everything Is Achieved Through Allāh's Help

A student wrote to Hadrat Wālā asking him for a treatment for a severe psychological illness. Hadrat Wālā replied to his letter and, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the illness was completely uprooted. Someone said: "There are clear blessings in Hadrat Wālā's instructions." Hadrat Wālā said: "There is nothing in my instructions. The fact of the matter is that it is solely Allāh's help and support. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Real Doer, I am nothing. A tanner does not know how to crush stones for road construction. But an engineer places his hand on his stone-crusher and is able to crush the stones for his road. Neither is my knowledge nor my understanding influential in the matter of rectification. Allāh *taʿālā* merely delegated a task to me and He helps me to carry it out. It is not my achievement in the least."

Overwhelming Respect

Hadrat Wālā is forever overwhelmed by respect for Allāh *taʿālā* and keeps away from the slightest whispering of disrespect towards Him. If, in the course of a discussion, he has to quote any person's disrespectful statement, he will bring both his hands together and say with absolute submission and tribute: "O Allāh! I repent. O Allāh! I repent."

I Am Filled With Faults

A person saw a dream in which he was reprimanded: "You have vile thoughts about the pious elders. You must repent quickly from this." He also came to Hadrat Wālā, clasped his hands and said: "I seek pardon from Janāb as well." Hadrat Wālā

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[1] *Husn al-ʿAzīz*, vol. 1, statement number 92.

immediately held the man's hands, separated them and said: "What are you doing? Why do you have to ask me to pardon you? Why are you including me in your dream? The dream made mention of pious elders. We certainly have to seek their pardon. I take an oath and say to you that I do not find any excellence within me – not with regard to knowledge, actions, statements and conditions. In fact, I am filled with nothing but defects. If someone were to speak ill of me, I can say with certainty that I do not even experience a whispering of not being eligible of the evil which he spoke about me. In fact, if someone were to praise me, I am astonished and think to myself: 'What praiseworthy quality do I have which has caused him to think of me in this manner? He has certainly been deceived.' It is rather Allāh's quality of concealing which has concealed my faults. I am therefore not offended in the least when anyone speaks ill of me. If anyone speaks of just one good quality in me, I immediately think of ten faults which are in me."

"Secondly, whatever bad things which you may have said about me was probably said out of ignorance. You are therefore excused. Thirdly, I have been making this supplication since a long time and I am refreshing it now: 'O Allāh! Do not take any of Your creation to task because of me.' I have pardoned with all my heart anyone who wronged me in the past or does it in the future. Allāh's creation must therefore have no worry whatsoever about me. No one should harbour any doubts in this regard. You too must be rest assured. I have already pardoned all people from the depths of my heart. You are included in this general pardon. In fact, if you ever feel the need, you have full permission to come and tell me anything you wish." Hadrat Wālā added: "If I do not pardon, or pardon and the other person is punished, what benefit will I achieve from it?"[1]

Hadrat Wālā said on another occasion: "If I do not pardon a person, can I ever bear to see him burning in the Hell-fire because of me?! I seek forgiveness in Allāh." He also said: "No person should think that this pardon includes monetary rights or else people will carry away all my possessions. The pardon only applies to verbal abuses and vulgarities."

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[1] *Husn al-'Azīz*, vol. 1, statement number 602.

Remorse Over Shortfalls In Actions

Hadrat Wālā said on several occasions: "I have a severe shortfall in actions but, all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, I am not heedless of my rectification. I am always concerned about rectifying such and such condition, and changing such and such situation. In short, I am not smug about any condition. Although I do not consider salvation to be confined to deeds but solely to Allāh's grace, it is the responsibility of man to carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions. This is why I am most remorseful over the shortfalls in my actions and am always worried about my rectification."

When Hadrat Wālā hears about the religiosity and piety of any of his associates and disciples, he says: "The father whose children surpass him in excellent qualities is most fortunate." He also says: "Allāh *taʿālā* has willed for me to have a good reputation, this is why He sends to me people who are good since before. In this way, I receive a good name for free." A poet says:

> Neither is the trap good nor the seeds which are placed in it. But coincidentally, a royal falcon got caught in my trap on each and every occasion.

Hadrat Wālā said: "No matter what discipline a person studied under me, he surpassed me in that discipline."

Although Hadrat Wālā was a matchless personality of his time as regards his internal and external excellences, he considers them to be totally insignificant even while accepting certain special excellences as a way of speaking about Allāh's favours on him. There is no sign whatsoever of self-conceit and pride in him. It is absolutely clear to those of insight. This is the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

The Meaning Of Denying Any Excellence

After relating a few incidents and statements of Hadrat Wālā, I consider it appropriate to quote an article written by him on the subject of statements and conditions of servitude.

Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* also used to take an oath and say: "I do not possess any excellence." A disciple raised the following objection to this statement before Hadrat Wālā. He said: "It has to mean one of two things: (1) If this is a

true oath, the excellences of Maulānā will have to be negated. (2) If it is not a true oath, why did Maulānā take an oath on an untruth? What beliefs should we hold about him?”

Hadrat Wālā replied: “The Maulānā must be considered to be true in his oath and we must also believe that he possesses excellences because his denial is with regard to past excellences while our belief is with regard to his present excellences. There is therefore no contradiction.”

I [the author] say: This is similar to a person climbing a lofty minaret with his gaze directed at the top. Even when he reaches the top, he will think to himself that he has not reached any considerable height because the sky seems to be just as high [as it was when he was looking at it from the bottom of the minaret]. Although he is right in thinking that he has not reached any considerable height in relation to the height of the sky, when observed from the ground we will say that he has reached a great height. Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> The sky is very low in comparison to the Throne [of Allāh], but much higher than the sandy hills.

Since the manifestations of Allāh *taʿālā* are limitless, no matter how high a seeker of His recognition reaches, he is still convinced that he is as he was on the first day of his spiritual journey. He is absolutely right in this conviction. As a saying goes:

ما عرفناك حق معرفتك

We have not recognized You as You ought to be recognized.

Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> O brother! This is an endless court. No matter on which level you reach, you are before Him.
>
> No one knows the reality. They are all passing on empty-handed.

I just remembered a statement of a Jhanjhānwī person with reference to Hadrat Wālā. He said: “He is progressing, this is the rank which is meant. When a person of such rank traverses the levels of spiritual progress and proceeds forward,

then each of the levels which he passed seems to be absolutely low and worthless in relation to the next anticipated level."

This is the basis of the above-quoted statements and incidents of Hadrat Wālā as regards servitude. Similar statements and incidents are found profusely in the lives of the spiritual masters. The same basis can be applied to them as well.

In short, the more the insight of a gnostic increases, the magnificence of Allāh *taʿālā* continues to be exposed to him day after day. At the same time, new points and ways of displaying servitude are continually realized by him. Consequently, no matter how perfect his acts of worship and obedience may be, he considers them to be worthless in relation to the rights of the magnificence of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is absolutely correct for him to think in this way because the right of Allāh's magnificence can never be fulfilled. This is why a gnostic is never content with any condition of his, never satisfied with the rectification of any of his levels, and he will take oaths to deny his excellences.

How Do Seekers Benefit From A Shaykh's Conditions?

This was a brief discussion of the special benefits acquired by Hadrat Wālā in the course of his condition of fear through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. As for the general benefits for the seekers, these are obvious and glaring because a perfect guide can only be one who has had personal experience of all the ups and downs of the path, and has personally faced all its obstacles and pitfalls.

Hadrat Wālā says: "I have experienced the hardest of conditions. Consequently, I have such experience of spiritual conditions that no matter how confusing a seeker's condition may be or how critical his internal stress may be, I do not experience the slightest hesitation in treating him – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, such plans and measures come to my mind, that if the seeker adopts them, he comes out of his condition very easily and quickly. This is especially so with regard to diagnosing the nature of whisperings and dangers, and prescribing a treatment for them. Allāh *taʿālā* has conferred me with such insight in this regard that very few people have it nowadays. And I do not say it out of pride."

This statement can be verified by not only one or two seekers, but countless without exaggeration. They are those whom – by the help of Allāh *taʿālā* – Hadrat Wālā removed from the hardest of obstacles in the path of Sufism very easily and quickly by adopting very concise words of wisdom and showing them the easiest of measures and procedures. He did this in the past and continues in this manner. The conditions of some of them can be learnt by studying *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. Some of them were so distressed that they were on the verge of committing suicide. But by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, a single letter from Hadrat Wālā would console them and they would desist from their intention.

A Chief Is Treated

There was a learned chief in Bareilly who was a student of Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. During his final illness, he was experiencing whisperings of having an evil death. He became very terrified and requested Hadrat Wālā to come. He sent this request through Munshī Akbar ʿAlī Sāhib Marhūm who was Hadrat Wālā's younger brother and was employed as a secretary at Bareilly Municipality. Hadrat Wālā feels extremely sorry for sick people and tries his utmost to fulfil their requests. So he travelled to Bareilly to visit the chief. The latter immediately poured out his heart and expressed his worries and concerns. Hadrat Wālā consoled him in such a manner that all his worries were removed and he became extremely happy. For as long as Hadrat Wālā remained in Bareilly, he insisted on sending elaborate foods to him daily although Hadrat Wāla was staying at his brother's house. The chief passed away recently in a very good and happy way through the teachings of Hadrat Wālā.

A Lawyer Is Treated

There was a Kānpūrī lawyer who was quite learned. While reading The Book of Fear in *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm* in 1319 A.H., he was overwhelmed by intense fear of an evil death and had virtually lost all hope. He was on the verge of giving up salāh, fasting and everything else. Coincidentally, Hadrat Wālā had gone to Kānpūr to attend a function. The lawyer showed the sections which he had been reading. Hadrat Wālā relates: "He was so overwhelmed by fear that he could not even read the text clearly." Hadrat Wālā provided satisfactory answers to his

objections and consoled him totally. Later on, the same lawyer requested Hadrat Wālā to pen those answers. Hadrat Wālā fulfilled his request and they were eventually published as a booklet titled *Khātimah bi al-Khayr*.

These are the blessings of the fear which Hadrat Wālā had experienced in the past. His experience enabled him to provide complete guidance and assistance to those who were in distress. It is difficult to find an equal to him in this field.

I just remembered an example which Hadrat Wālā's senior wife had given. The reasons which caused Hadrat Wālā to be overcome by fear were explained to the reader previously. When his distress used to increase considerably, he would relate his worries and pains to his partner in life and his remover of worries, i.e. his senior wife. She used to reply to Hadrat Wālā's concerns with most appropriate and reassuring words, and console him in this way. Hadrat Wālā says: "I received a lot of comfort from her replies."

I [the author] say: All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā acquired the blessing of coinciding with the Sunnah in this matter as well. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was initially terrified by divine revelation, Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* had comforted and reassured him. Even after Hadrat Wālā recovered from his fear, his senior wife used to periodically console him by relating the following example to him: A person has to go to a certain place and the road goes through a garden. But there is a bush of thorny trees and obstacles parallel to it. Incidentally, he starts walking through the thorny bush and his entire body gets covered with blood because of the constant pricking of the thorns. He had to suffer a lot of pain in the process. However, he continued traversing the path and as he proceeded, he eventually came back onto the beautiful garden path. The man certainly bore hardships but he was not prevented from covering his journey. A great benefit of this experience was that he will now be able to steer and guide others in a proper manner. In other words, if a seeker falls into a similar worry, he will be able to remove him from it very easily.

Another point which becomes clear from this example is that although the person has to bear severe hardships when he is overwhelmed by fear, it does not affect his actual journey.

In short, this tribulation was an immense source of mercy for Hadrat Wālā himself and for those seeking guidance. By the help of Allāh, we now come to the end of the first section of the wisdoms behind the condition of retraction and fear. I commence the next section in the name of Allāh. It contains wisdoms of retraction and fear from Hadrat Wālā's writings. Inspiration is from Allāh *ta'ālā* alone.

Second Section

This section contains wisdoms of retraction and fear from the writings of Hadrat Wālā.

1. A seeker wrote a lengthy letter to Hadrat Wālā in which he described his retraction and whisperings. Hadrat Wālā writes towards the end of his booklet *al-Ibtilā' li Ahl al-Istifā'*:

I now conclude this quick article by listing some benefits and wisdoms of whisperings, and some types of retraction and inclination towards disobedience which are experienced by a seeker. These whisperings contain certain subtle divine blessings which, when the person in trouble sees them, he will say the following spontaneously and receive consolation:

> A person committing a sin should never become distressed because Allāh's mercies are also concealed in it.

The benefits and wisdoms are:

(a) The person is never self-conceited because he considers himself to be in a terrible condition.

(b) He is always trembling, he is not proud about his knowledge and actions. He realizes that his knowledge, actions and condition are insignificant because he has seen them for what they really are.

(c) Once he experiences such a condition, he develops the strength to combat Satan. He does not fear him and thinks to himself that Satan cannot do anything more. Had he not experienced this condition, he would have not been strong enough and would have feared every harmful company.

(d) If he had to suddenly experience this condition at the time of death, Allāh *ta'ālā* alone knows how distressed he would become and with what thoughts he would die.

But once this obstacle passes, he gets the strength to bear it. If he experiences it again at the time of death, he will not get stressed and will not have any bad thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*. He will give his life peacefully and out of love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

(e) Such a person becomes an expert and it becomes easy for him to steer and guide others.

(f) He witnesses Allāh's mercy over him all the time and feels that a worthless person like himself is receiving such excellent bounties.

(g) He literally sees the meaning of this Hadīth: "A person will not be forgiven by virtue of his deeds but by virtue of Allāh's mercy."

There are other benefits and wisdoms as well. I had said with regard to this collection that it is a harbinger to a praiseworthy condition.[1]

2. A student who was overwhelmed by fear wrote a long letter to Hadrat Wālā. The essence of it was: "I find the condition of unbelief in my condition and emotions. Although there is no change in my belief, I feel as if my actions and deeds are those of unbelief." Hadrat Wālā wrote the following reply:

Congratulations to you. This condition is known as fear. It is a lofty condition which was experienced by the senior Sahābah as well. The *Sahīh Bukhārī* makes reference to seventy Sahābah who feared hypocrisy over themselves. Allāh willing, this condition will soon be changed into affinity. I myself experienced such a condition and acquired thousands of benefits from it. Some of the benefits are: self-conceit disappears, you witness Allāh's power, you realize your own incapability, and so on.[2]

3. Hadrat Wālā writes a reply to a lengthy letter of another person who was experiencing retraction: "I read your entire letter, there is nothing to worry about. This condition is known as retraction and there are several causes of it. One of the causes is when a person does more than what he can bear.

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[1] Quoted from the introduction of *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*.
[2] *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.

This was the cause of your retraction. It is not a bad condition, rather a praiseworthy and beneficial one. In fact, the spiritual masters consider it to be higher than the condition of expansion because it is more able to treat blameworthy traits. Anyway, it is neither untreatable nor – Allāh forbid – a sign of deprivation. Almost all Sufis experience this condition, obtain salvation from it, and then progress in the path. One sign of its praiseworthiness has been written by yourself, viz. love of the shaykh. A person who is driven away is deprived of this bounty. In short, you must take full comfort [from what I said], start engaging in dhikr a little at a time, and do not increase it on your own. Inform me periodically of your practices and act according to my instructions. Allāh willing, you will progress daily."[1]

4. Hadrat Wālā writes to a person experiencing retraction: Allāh *taʿālā* is all merciful and all-wise. The enthusiasm, yearning and ache which you consider to be perfection is not perfection. The dryness and whisperings which you consider to be harmful are not harmful. If you were to acquire those conditions, they would have resulted in self-conceit because you consider them to be great things. Allāh *taʿālā* has really saved you from self-conceit. This in itself is a favour from Him. It is obligatory to be grateful for it, and not to complain.

> The Being who does not make you wealthy knows more about your wellbeing than your own self.

The above includes spiritual wealth. If the thing which you consider to be a loss was not found in you, you would not have developed this humility which is a great bounty. It is obligatory to be thankful for it. Since there is a possibility of ingratitude in this regard, you must understand its reality so that you can give thanks for it. It seems you have divested your mind of the theme which is discussed in *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. Remember this general principle: You must not act against Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in actions which are within your choice. Thereafter, no matter what conditions you experience – since they are not of your choice – you must not bother in the least about them. Continue doing what you have to; you are not deprived. You yourself will establish the truth of

[1] Ibid.

this at some time in the future. For the time being, accept what I am saying.[1]

5. Hadrat Wālā writes to another person experiencing retraction: Congratulations to you, congratulations to you. This is that condition which is my heartfelt desire to be experienced by my associates provided it is accompanied with insight and fortitude. Its benefits are countless. For example, the roots of self-conceit and pride are chopped off, a person is constantly conscious of being under the absolute control of Allāh *taʿālā*, the removal of hesitation after realizing that Satanic influences have ended. This is the real objective of the Sharīʿah. If a person experiences this condition at the time of his death, he will naturally become agitated and Allāh alone knows what he will think while he is agitated. When he experiences this condition while he is alive and fully aware [i.e. not on his death bed], he will not be affected by it if he experiences at the time of death. There are many other benefits of this condition. The essence of all is obliteration of one's self. The expansion which is experienced after it is also unparalleled. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for having enabled me to witness the benefits of this condition. This is why I consider it to be an intrinsic element for the realization of one's objective, and also hope that my friends and associates experience it. I repeat my congratulations to you.[2]

The reader can gauge the many benefits which Hadrat Wālā derived from this condition. Look at how essential he considers it for the seekers.

6. Another person wrote to Hadrat Wālā about his distressful condition. He went to the extent of begging Hadrat Wālā to rescue him from a dangerous whirlpool and convey him to the shores of consolation or else he can see no alternative but to take away his own life.

Hadrat Wālā's reply: This condition is known as retraction and its benefits are more than the condition of expansion. Although the benefits will not be realized while you are in the midst of retraction, you will learn most of them later on. Even if you do not come to know of them, the objective will be realized.

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[1] *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.
[2] Ibid.

Knowledge of the realization of the objective is not necessary. The conditions which you are experiencing at present are the effects of real humility and servitude. There is a strong possibility of it resulting in acquiring the treasure of proximity to Allāh *ta'ālā*.

أنا عند المنكسرة قلوبهم

I [Allāh] am with the broken-hearted.

Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> The path does not entail keeping one's intellect and temperament energetic. Grace from the Master is not received without servitude.

You must never feel distressed. Engage in as much dhikr as you can even if it means having to impose on yourself slightly and even if you do not feel like it. You may decrease some of the dhikr which you consider to be over-burdensome, but engage in a lot of seeking forgiveness. Continue informing me once or twice a week for as long as this condition remains. Allāh willing, it will be removed very quickly. This condition is experienced by all. In fact, I am happy that you are experiencing it because it is a sign that you are traversing the path. These are all obstacles along the path.[1]

7. Hadrat Wālā replies to another similar lengthy letter: These are natural changes and changes of the self; not spiritual and of the heart. So instead of being harmful, they are beneficial. Self-conceit is treated through these changes, the reality of servitude is witnessed, and self-obliteration is clearly seen. This is really a type of retraction which has the following wisdoms: A person becomes regular with optional works, it is a place of test – if you pass it, you will be eligible for very high marks. Ponder over all this carefully and read it several times. I too am praying for your wellness.

Note: There are many other letters of this nature but I am sufficing with these seven out of fear that this section will get too long.

After reading the above letters, the reader must have learnt some of the wisdoms behind the condition of fear and, more

[1] *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.

importantly, realized that if Hadrat Wālā had not experienced this condition himself, he would never have been able to console and provide solace to other with such conviction, confidence, strength and insight. This in itself is a great wisdom behind experiencing this condition.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, we completed relating the wisdoms behind the condition of fear from the writings of Hadrat Wālā. I now quote a special wisdom which emanated as a statement from the blessed mouth of Hadrat Wālā, and conclude this second section with it. He said:

"A seeker becomes distressed when he looks around and finds that the path is closed to him from all sides. Whereas the underlying reason behind it is that Allāh *taʿālā* wants him to lose hope from all sides and to turn to Him alone. Sealing off this door is not meant to separate himself from Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, Allāh *taʿālā* wants to rescue him from Satan and take him under His refuge. This is similar to a mother confining her child in the house and locking it from all sides because there is a bear outside. On the other hand, the child becomes distressed, annoyed and very upset, and feels that a terrible injustice has been committed against him. This poor child does not know that it is not his mother's purpose to keep him restricted. She actually wants to protect him from the bear which is walking around outside and to bring him under her refuge."

I [the author] say: When the path is closed off to the seeker from all sides, it means that no matter how he tries to repulse the baseless whisperings, they are not repulsed. Instead, the more he tries to repulse them, the more they inundate him and the more powerful they become. When Allāh *taʿālā* takes him under His protection, it means that when all his efforts to repulse them failed – and in fact, were painful – he is forced to give them up and is compelled to turn to Allāh *taʿālā*. When he does this, he perceives immediate peace. After this one experience, instead of trying to repulse them, he tries to maintain and perpetuate Allāh's focus and attention on him. He continues his efforts in this regard until he is successful with Allāh's help, and if he does not completely uproot the whisperings, he certainly weakens them. His pain is then removed.

Hadrat Wālā provides an easier explanation to the above. He says: "Allāh *taʿālā* puts the seeker through this constricted pass so that he may be protected against the internal destroyers of self-conceit and pride. Had he not been treated in this manner, he would have become trapped in the web of evils of the self and destroyed himself in the process."

Third Section

Verses, Ahādīth and statements of the spiritual masters explaining the wisdoms behind the condition of retraction and fear.

Qur'ānic verses

عَسٰى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

It may well be that you dislike something while it may be better for you.[1]

وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللهُ الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا

So that Allāh may purify and cleanse the believers…[2]

اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللهُ الَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِيْنَ

Do you think you will enter Paradise when Allāh has not yet distinguished those who are fighters among you and not yet distinguished the steadfast?[3]

وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللهُ مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللهُ مَا فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ

Allāh had wanted to test whatever is within you and to cleanse that which is in your hearts.[4]

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللهُ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِيْنَ

We had tested those who were before them. Allāh shall certainly know those who are truthful and He shall certainly know those who are liars.[5]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 216.
[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 140.
[3] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 142.
[4] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 154.
[5] Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt, 29: 3.

The following couplets apply to the above verses:

> Anyone who makes claims to love has to endure thousands of hardships.
>
> If he is true in his claims, he bears the hardships. If he is a liar, he flees from them.

Ash-Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* said:

It is good when the scale of experience comes in-between so that the liar can be disgraced.

The following couplets also apply to the above verses:

> Do not shift away from the path merely by looking at a person's appearance. The essence of a man is identified by his patience and forbearance.
>
> If he is not true, he will not bear hardships. If he is fundamentally true, he will be patient.

Ahādīth

يبتلى الرجل على حسب دينه، فإن كان في دينه صلبا اشتد بلاءه. وإن كان في دينه رقة هون عليه، فما زال كذلك حتى يمشي على الأرض ما له ذنب. رواه الترمذي، وابن ماجه، والدارمي.

A person is tested according to the level of his religiosity. If he is firm in his religion, his tribulation is severe. If he is lax in his religion, it is made easy for him. He remains like that until he walks on earth without any sin on him.[1]

Statements of The Spiritual Masters

Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> I am crying because He loves crying and grief the most.
>
> I am enamoured by my ache and pain solely and exclusively for the pleasure of my Master.
>
> I make the soil of grief the antimony for my eyes so that the rivers of both eyes may be filled with pearls.
>
> When the creation sheds tears for Him, they are pearls; but the creation considers them to be tears.

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[1] Narrated by Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Dāramī.

More trials and tribulations befall His own because they are with the Beloved.

A child trembles with fear from the lancet of the cupper while the affectionate mother is happy with this grief.

As long as the child of the sweet-maker does not cry, the ocean of his generosity does not gush forth.

As long as the clouds do not cry, the orchard will never smile. As long as the infant does not cry, the milk will not gush forth.

Water always flows towards a low lying region. Where there is difficulty, that is where an answer is needed.

Medicine moves towards the place of the hurt. Cure goes to the place of pain.

O traveller! When you experience any restriction, that is where the good for you lies. So do not feel despondent.

If the season were to remain glittering all the time, the heat of the sun would have remained in the orchard.

If He shows you a stern countenance, He is also most merciful. While the heat comes smiling, it burns as well.

When hardship befalls you, consider it to be relief. Remain happy and do not frown.

The joy of happiness is the fruit of the orchard of grief. This joy is a wound, and that grief is its bandage.

Grief is like a mirror for a hardworking person because he sees its opposite in it.

After displaying the opposite of hardship, it shows another opposite, viz. prosperity and joyous living.

Consider these two qualities to be like your hand with its fingers extended. The closed fist of hardship is always followed by relief.

The hand can neither remain closed all the time nor open all the time. It has to experience either of the two.

These are two qualities which are supervised by the worker and the one who strives. Like the two wings of a bird, these two conditions are essential for him.

The hardships of winter and autumn bring splendour to the garden and are the lifeblood of spring.

So that the ground which conceals gemstones and pearls may bring out their colour.

So that the fire of fear and hope, and what is concealed by His might and affection may be exposed.

The spring seasons are the kindnesses and affections of Allāh. The autumn seasons are His threats and warnings.

The heart of a mujāhid is therefore sometimes open, and sometimes experiences the restriction of hardship and the pain of grief.

The soil and water of our bodies are harmful and destructive to our souls.

A servant who experiences the discomfort of hardship begs at the court of Allāh *taʿālā*, and presents countless complaints about his pain.

Allāh *taʿālā* says: Without this pain and discomfort…

This is why the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have to bear the most hardships and calamities from all the creation.

When the skin is cleansed with medicine, it becomes nice like the leather of animals.

Man too is like that skin. He has become filthy and heavy because of those sins.

Give him a lot of bitter and sharp medicines so that he becomes pure, clean and beautiful.

If you do not understand all this O you who are deluded, then be pleased over the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* imposes hardship on you without your choice.

Because when a friend puts you through a test, it is for your purification. His knowledge is superior to all your planning.

When he sees himself purified, the test seems very sweet. When he recovers from his illness, the medicine appears tasty.

I am astonished at the one who wants purification but screams out when he experiences discomfort at the time when he is being purified.

Do not grieve if any calamity befalls you. Do not worry when you suffer any loss.

Because it repulses calamity and prevents loss.

□

Listen to this example, recognize your own worth and – O young man – do not turn away from calamities.

Every time it heats up, it comes out and makes a big noise.

The cook turns the ladle constantly so that the food becomes hot properly and is roasted thoroughly.

I am not heating you because I dislike you, but so that your taste and flavour may come out to the full.

Submit to the hardship and relax so that I may cut you. You should therefore present to me a neck like that of Hadrat Ismāʿīl *ʿalayhis salām*.

O chickpea! Suffer in this tribulation so that your self does not remain.

I am saying these bitter things to you so that I may cleanse you through them.

The one who does not exercise patience during a calamity is not accepted in the high court.

□

> May my life be sacrificed for you because you are my life and also the beloved of my life. The one who becomes the dust at your threshold has attained salvation from worry.
>
> I will experience a weak and terrible life when I am killed by your sword of grief.
>
>
>
> During the period when we were caught up by the tribulation of your gaze, we became fearless of the tribulations of the entire world during that same period.
>
> Previously I did not know a single letter from the tablet of my existence. I became literate after coming to your school of grief.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* the three sections related to the wisdom behind the conditions of retraction and fear are now concluded. As we had promised previously, we will now describe the procedures for the removal of intense and prolonged fears. This subject is given the title: Treatment for retraction and fear. Allāh willing, if this procedure is followed, a major portion of this condition will be cured. In fact, the imaginary danger will be removed automatically. The total treatment for it follows. This treatment is derived from the Hadīth which encourages certain forms of dhikr or dhikr in general during such times. There are other treatments prescribed by the spiritual masters – e.g. visualizing one's shaykh, the dhikr of pās anfās, visualizing the letters of Allāh's name, etc. – these too are subsidiaries of the main treatment. If a person becomes distressed by his fears and this results in weakness of his heart, palpitations, physical weakness or any other illness; then together with the mentioned-treatment, it will be necessary for him to resort to fortifying foods, [lawful] activities which bring joy to the heart, and temporary medications for his illness. This treatment has been presented here because some seekers experience this tribulation which results in internal and external setbacks for them. They must not disvalue this treatment merely because it appears so simple and short. They can test it out and observe its effectiveness.

ان الله تجاوز لأمتي عما حدث به أنفسها

Allāh taʿālā *overlooked the evil thoughts of my followers as long as they do not utter them or do not put them into action.*

ʿAzīzī said that another narration has the words: "The whisperings which are in their chests." Khafī said that there are five levels of thoughts: (1) hājis, (2) khāṯir, (3) h̲adīth an-nafs, (4) humm, (5) ʿazm.

When a thought occurs in the heart and the self does not respond to it in any way, it is known as a hājis. If the person gets the inspiration to repulse it at the very beginning, he will not have to worry about the other levels. But if the thought hovers around in the self, comes and goes, but the self has not decided on any particular course of action, then it is known as a khāṯir. If the self has decided equally on carrying out or not carrying the thought, and does not give preference to one over the other, it is known as h̲adīth an-nafs.

There is neither any punishment, in the case of evil, nor any reward, in the case of good, in these three levels. Once the person carries out the action, he will either be punished or rewarded for it. But there is neither punishment nor reward for hājis, khāṯir and h̲adīth an-nafs (as opined by some scholars).

Once the self has an inclination towards carrying out or not carrying out an act, but its preference is not strong, then it is known as a humm; and there is reward for it if it is for good, and punishment if it is for evil. If there is a strong inclination towards the act to the extent that it becomes a firm determination wherein he has no control of desisting, then this is known as an ʿazm. Here too there is reward if it is for good, and punishment if it is for evil.

I say that the word "whispering" can be applied to all three levels, viz. hājis, khāṯir and h̲adīth an-nafs. A person is not taken to task for all three types of whisperings. The ruling of pardon is not different in the first two levels. The absence of accountability for h̲adīth an-nafs is proven from the above-quoted H̲adīth. The absence of accountability for the first two [hājis and khāṯir] is more because if h̲adīth an-nafs is pardoned, the preceding two levels (which are lower and less serious) are more likely to be pardoned. If you have a misgiving over the point that based on the H̲adīth, the ruling of pardon is

based on the technical meaning of <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs then what is the proof for it? This misgiving can be repelled as follows: <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs must be understood in the literal meaning unless there is a clear Sharʿī definition to the contrary. When there is no Sharʿī definition to the contrary, then the literary meaning is applied. Hence, the meaning of <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs will be the same as explained above.

The reason why a person is not taken to task for a hājis is that it is not his action. He merely experienced something over which he neither has any power nor control. As for khā<u>t</u>ir which comes after it, although the person is able to repulse it by removing the hājis the moment it comes to him (e.g. by occupying himself in something else), since khā<u>t</u>ir is lower than <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs – and the latter is pardoned according to the <u>H</u>adīth – the khā<u>t</u>ir is more deserving to be pardoned. This explanation solves a major objection.

The objection is: The general principles of the Sharīʿah and rational rules demand that a person be taken to task for actions which are within his choice, and not be taken to task for those which are not within his choice. (This is the prelude, and the objection follows): It is a peculiar trait of the community of Mu<u>h</u>ammad *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* not to be taken to task for whisperings. If this is with regard to the unintentional actions related to these levels (in the sense that they are not taken to task for them while other nations are taken to task), then this would mean that the past nations are taken to task for unintentional actions – and this contradicts the principles of the Sharīʿah as is obvious from the verse in which Allāh *taʿālā* says: "Allāh does not impose on a person more than what he can bear." If this is with regard to actions which are within a person's choice, then what difference is there between an intentional and an unintentional act so as to necessitate punishment for an ʿazm and no punishment for <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs although both are within one's choice?

The solution is found in the fact that the peculiarity [of the followers of Mu<u>h</u>ammad *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] is as regards actions which are within their choice. And the difference between khā<u>t</u>ir and <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs, and ʿazm is that although the repulsing of khā<u>t</u>ir and <u>h</u>adīth an-nafs is within a person's choice, there is a need for a will and an intent, and most people forget this. In most cases, hājis (in this state of

forgetfulness) is unintentionally drawn towards khāṯir and ẖadīth an-nafs. Thus, punishment for khāṯir and ẖadīth an-nafs does not contradict the general principles of the Sharīʿah (because they are within one's choice in the sense that repulsing them was within his choice. When he did not repulse them, their existence became within one's choice. It is on this basis that a community being accountable for it was not against the principles of the Sharīʿah). But Allāh's mercy conferred this speciality to the Muslims by pardoning them this level, as was the case with past nations when it came to severe and difficult injunctions. These were lightened for the Muslim community. This level is therefore within one's choice, but there was severity in it because it was a type of fetter and an imposition. As for ʿazm, a hājis does not lead to it. Rather, it develops from an independent will and intent.

This is the difference between ʿazm and ẖadīth an-nafs. The basis of pardon was the proclivity which comes from forgetfulness. To be taken to task for the basis is an ʿazm in itself. Since this is the case, if the sin was committed by ẖadīth an-nafs through a separate ʿazm – even though the ʿazm may not be a sin, e.g. getting enjoyment from intentionally fantasizing about a woman – then one will obviously be taken to task for it. According to me, taking such enjoyment will be included in the general sense of this H̱adīth: "The self also commits adultery. Its adultery is that it hopes and desires." Another narration states: "The heart has an inclination and hopes (obviously, taking enjoyment is not possible without desire and inclination. Thus, this taking of enjoyment is also considered to be adultery). Reflecting over this H̱adīth is a great cure for whisperings. The Sufi masters resort to this treatment (this is why this H̱adīth was quoted in this booklet). The discussion of some seniors (such as Imām Ghazzālī *raẖimahullāh*) on this theme is slightly different, but the essential objective does not change (i.e. a person is not taken to task for what is not within his control and taken to task if it is within his control, irrespective of whether it is out of his control in reality or as a rule).

Treatment For Retraction And Fear

The previous discussion on the wisdom behind the conditions of retraction and fear was divided into three sections. Coincidentally, the present discussion also contains three

sections. This treatment is like a prescription which contains three parts as detailed below:

First section

To study the following books which are written by Hadrat Wālā and also the previous discussion on the wisdom behind the conditions of retraction and fear.

1. *Khātimah bi al-Khayr.*
2. *al-Ibtilā' li Ahl al-Istifā'.*[1]
3. *Khayr al-Akhbār fī Khabar al-Ikhtiyār* which is published towards the end of the book, *Kamālāt Ashrafīyyah.*
4. *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter seven.

Second section

To study certain themes which are quoted below. These have been written by Hadrat Wālā and are divided into two sections, one containing his writings and the other his statements.

Writings

Quoted from Khātimah bi al-Khayr

1. This is a treatment for a harmful illness. A person is not taken to task for a whispering of fear, as explained previously. However, when it overcomes and overwhelms a person, it causes a lot of stress. Intense worry and pain envelope the heart. Since these illnesses are not illnesses of the Sharīʿah, it is not necessary to treat them. But they are chronic natural illnesses. A simple, effective and short remedy is explained here. A fear is essentially the unwitting turning of the self towards something bad. It is rationally proven, and the wise sages and scholars also accept the fact that when the self is focused on a particular thing, it cannot focus on something else at the same time. When any evil thought comes to your heart, do not try to repulse it. Do not delve into it nor on its causes because this would result in becoming even more engrossed in it. Instead, you should immediately focus your thoughts towards a righteous act. In this way, the evil thought

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[1] This booklet had been published on its own but is rarely found today. However, it has become a part of the introduction to *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. One may refer to it there.

will be repulsed automatically. If the thought returns, repel it in the same way.

A Treatment For Overwhelming Fear

2. A seeker was overcome by extreme fear which also resulted in physical weakness. He wrote: "I fear I will melt like ice and come to an end in this way." [Hadrat Wālā] wrote to him: Congratulations on your state of fear and worry. This is from among the lofty conditions. If you end in this way it will be the greatest form of martyrdom. However, the Sunnah demands that you make balance and moderation your fundamental basis for as long as your knowledge and strength can support you. Be conscious of affinity with fear, hope for mercy with worry and evil thoughts about one's self, continuity with obliteration, existence with non-existence, and observation of bounties with excessive humility. You must pay particular attention to this so that you can set right the final hours of others before you come to an end. A person who is firm in his attachment to Allāh *taʿālā* is less terrified by the above mentioned conditions. In most cases, they increase and intensify when a person thinks about them. Thinking about them is considered harmful in this path. This is the meaning which is derived from the following Hadīth:

سددوا وقاربوا واستقيموا ولن تحصوا ومن شاق شاق الله عليه

You should remain moderate, do as much as you possibly can and be steadfast. You will never be able to do everything. Whoever imposes difficulty on his self, Allāh will make it difficult for him.

When you experience excessive fears and evil thoughts about yourself then think that we are defective and sinners in every condition. Just as the true servants of Allāh *taʿālā* will receive salvation, the same will apply to those who repent. If we do not get the most prominent seat, we will at least get a place in the back where the shoes are placed. If we do not get the first prize, we can at least hope for salvation after being beaten. After understanding this, you must engage in excessive repetition of *Allāhummaghfirlī* (O Allāh forgive me). Allāh willing, your mind

will come right. If your retraction is not overpowered even after this, you must come here immediately after Ramadān.[1]

A note from the author: Glory to Allāh! Look at with what insight, power, attention and affection he explained the procedure to this person. And in the case where the person's retraction is not cured, look at with what determination and confidence Hadrat Wālā asked him to come to him for treatment. All these are the blessings of Hadrat Wālā himself experiencing overwhelming fear in the past. Therefore, whatever he says in such situations, he says with absolute confidence and based on personal experience. This is the very reason why Hadrat Wālā has so much of mercy towards those who are going through such tribulations and steers them with limitless affection.

Fearing An Evil End

3. Another seeker had written a lengthy letter. The gist of it is: Sometimes I experience the joy and happiness of īmān in my heart. At other times, I think about my evil existence and am overcome by a fear of an evil death. [Hadrat Wālā] wrote to him: The sum of your condition is retraction and expansion. Both conditions are very lofty and both increase one's proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. You must therefore consider both to be bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* and be grateful to Him. When you are overcome by retraction, you must study *Iksīr Hidāyat (Tarjumah Kīmiyā-e-Saʿādat*) or the chapter on hope for Allāh's mercy from the book *Thalāthīn (Tarjumah Arbaʿīn*). You must study these repeatedly. I am also praying for you.[2]

A Treatment For Worry Which Is Caused By Retraction

4. A seeker was suffering from intense worry because of the condition of retraction. [Hadrat Wālā] wrote to him: Your condition is quite good. There are different ways of worship. Reflection is a form of worship. Dhikr without counting the number of repetitions is also a form of worship. Considering yourself to be despicable and ignoble is also a form of worship. In short, the objective is acquired in every condition. Yes, there are two conditions which are reprehensible; sinning and heedlessness. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, these are not in you.

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[1] *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.
[2] Ibid.

As for your overwhelming enthusiasm, this is a temporary condition and its absence is neither harmful to the seeker nor can it remain exactly as it is forever. The obstacles which you suspect are mere assertions and nothing else. You must remain satisfied with what I have written and follow it without asking for any proof, and continue with your tasks with ease and comfort. The heart is certainly weakened by worry and this can be harmful. But you are neither ill nor do you need any treatment. However, because you are not conversant with this field, you do not know about your own health. This too is not harmful.[1]

Letters To Various Seekers Suffering From Retraction

5. Several people who were suffering from retraction wrote to Hadrat Wālā. His replies are quoted below. They include the causes, diagnosis and treatments.

(a) This is known as retraction. You must not pay any attention to it. Remain occupied in your tasks and turn to excessive seeking of forgiveness. The benefits of this are more than expansion. Patience, teaching, acceptance and entrustment are from among its etiquette.

(b) This condition which you described is known as retraction. There are several reasons for it and the treatment for it is also various. If you have not committed any sin and did not intermingle with outsiders, then the reason for it is that you are being put through a test. Resort to reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and patience, and engage in seeking forgiveness. Study my *Mawāʿiz* and *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. Allāh's mercy will be showered on you.

(c) This is known as retraction. Sometimes it is caused by natural medical changes in the body, sometimes by sinning, and sometimes it is a test. When the cause cannot be identified, all the treatments have to be brought together. In other words, have yourself checked by a doctor in order to regain a balance in your temperament and remain focussed in your tasks without hesitation.[2]

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[1] *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.
[2] *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.

Be Patient

6. Hadrat Wālā writes to a person who was experiencing retraction:

> O Hāfiz! Be patient over the hardships which are encountered over time. There will certainly come a time when you will realize your objective.

In this context, patience means that you must continue doing all the tasks which are within your control and choice. Do not become agitated if you experience any matter which is not within your control, and do not resort to any procedures to overcome it. Hand it over to Allāh *taʿālā* and remain silent.[1]

7. Hadrat Wālā described certain procedures which should be followed in order to get rid of certain fears. He wrote these to some of those who were suffering from these fears.

(a) Whisperings should not cause any worry. Worry weakens the heart and results in a double worry. The only thing to do in such a situation is to disregard the whisperings totally and not to pay any attention to them. In fact, it will be better to be happy over them. This strengthens the heart, rejects the whisperings and they are cut off very quickly. If there is no sin in them, why should you worry?

Note: This seeker had pledged bayʿah to a person who belonged to the spiritual lineage of Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was gone to Makkah Muʿazzamah at the time. He benefited tremendously from this reply and sent another letter in which he wrote: "All praise is due to Allāh I am neither inundated by whisperings nor false premises. They have been severed and obliterated completely. I do not know how to thank Hadrat for having steered me during these difficult times…"

(b) A seeker wrote that sometimes his heart experiences certain whisperings which cause him to feel that his īmān is in danger. Hadrat Wālā wrote to him: "This is a mercy. Have you not read the Hadīth in which it is stated: 'That is a clear indication of īmān'? A major advantage of this is that the root of self-conceit is chopped off. It is certainly and most definitely not harmful.

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[1] Ibid.

(c) Do not resort to any special procedures, efforts and enquiry in this regard. Just give a superficial attention to it and all these fears will disappear gradually.[1]

(d) A simple treatment for this is that when you are overwhelmed by such thoughts, you must wilfully direct yourself towards a good act and remain directed towards it. If, after this, the thoughts still remain or new thoughts come to your mind, then they are certainly beyond your will because two opposing thoughts cannot come together at one and the same time by your own will. Your confusion is thus removed. If you are wilfully neglectful in directing yourself towards good thoughts, then be warned: neglect is atoned for through seeking forgiveness, and you must then be conscious of the above procedure. It procedure is extremely easy. There is no simpler procedure. Make it your practice and do not worry in the least.[2]

Statements

Do Not Be Worried By Whisperings And Fears

1. A seeker must neither be worried by detestable fears nor consider himself to be rejected [by Allāh *taʿālā*] because of them. These are whisperings which are cast by Satan in the heart. This is similar to a person whispering evil things into another person's ears without the latter having the ability to stop him. Although he detests the whisperings, he is forced to hear them. He will be a hearer – not a listener nor a speaker. So what sin did he commit!? In fact, he will be rewarded for the harm which he is suffering because of his detestation.

His example is like a person rushing enthusiastically to meet his beloved king. On the way, he meets the king's enemy who begins speaking ill of the king in an insolent manner in order to prevent the person from going to him. He will certainly be offended by this, but his intelligence and desire to meet the king demand that he pays no attention whatsoever to the prattling of this unworthy hypocrite. If he were to start disputing and arguing with him, he may well miss the visiting time of the king.

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[1] *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.
[2] *ʿIlāj al-Khiyāl, Juz Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, an-Nūr, vol. 15, no. 3, Rajab al-Murajjab 1353 A.H.

He must rather impose patience on himself, remain silent and continue on his way. Once he reaches the court of the king, the wretched fellow [the enemy] will first of all automatically lag behind. [If he has the audacity of entering the court] he will be held by his ears and expelled. In most cases, this is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that when a person attains total proximity with Him, whisperings come to an end. If, due to certain reasons and special wisdoms, they do not come to an end, the person must still not become worried because there is absolutely no punishment for unwitting whisperings and they are definitely not sins. Yes, the person will certainly experience discomfort and distress, but he will be rewarded for this and his ranks will be elevated.

The Peculiar Nature Of Whisperings And Fears

2. Whisperings are like an electric wire. If you hold a live wire with the intention of pulling it towards you, it will shock you. If you hold it with the intention of moving it away from you, it will still shock you. It is best not to touch it at all – neither to draw it towards you nor to move it away from you. This is the way of acquiring safety from whisperings and fears – i.e. do not even pay any attention to them; neither to draw them towards you nor to drive them away from you.

An Example Of The Heart

3. The heart is like the main street on which everyone – the rich, the poor, noble and ignoble – walks. No one has the right to stop the other. There can be no objection to even a tanner and toilet cleaner walking on it. Each one is walking and going towards his destination. Allāh *taʿālā* made the heart in the same way. All types of thoughts – good and bad – enter it. No one has the right to demand only good thoughts to enter it and to completely ban evil thoughts. If evil thoughts enter unwittingly, there is nothing to fear. Yes, evil thoughts should neither be brought wittingly nor should they be entertained wittingly. Thereafter, the person must continue with his tasks peacefully and calmly. He must not pay any heed whatsoever to detestable whisperings.

The Cause Of A Seeker's Worry

4. A seeker becomes worried because he thinks that whisperings are created in the heart. This is not the case. It is Satan who casts them from the outside. For example, if a

house is filled with grain, it does not mean that the grain was grown in it. Rather, it was grown on a farm, brought from there, and the house was filled with it.

Whatever <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Wālā said above was with regard to whisperings entering the heart. As for their actual occurrence in the heart, he said: It seems as if the whisperings have embedded themselves in the depths of the heart, but this is not the case. They do not occur within the heart itself, but remain around it. As for what is thought to be within the heart, they are not whisperings but their effects and their reflections. The only thing which occurs within the heart is firmly-embedded belief. This is understood from Allāh's words:

وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيْمَانُ فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ

Īmān has not entered in your hearts as yet.

Whisperings and fears are nothing but assumed and superficial things. This is understood from the following words of Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

إن الشيطان جاثم على قلب ابن ادم، فإذا ذكر الله خنس، وإذا غفل وسوس.

Satan is perched on man's heart. When man remembers Allāh, Satan withdraws. When man is heedless of Allāh, Satan whispers to him.

Look at the difference between the word *fī* (in) in the Qur'ānic verse and the word *ʿalā* (on) in the above <u>H</u>adīth.

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Wālā continues: This is similar to a fly sitting on a mirror. Because its reflection is falling inside the mirror, it seems as if the fly is sitting inside whereas it is sitting on the mirror. What we are seeing inside the mirror is not the fly but merely its reflection. This does not cause any defect to the mirror.

One Ought To Rejoice Over Whisperings

5. Satan only casts whisperings in a heart which has īmān. Like a thief who only goes to a house in which there is some wealth. Instead of being grieved by whisperings, a person should be rationally pleased by them because Satan's casting of whisperings into his heart is a sign that the wealth of īmān is present in it. A <u>H</u>adīth gives glad tidings in this regard: "That is a clear indication of īmān." When a seeker rejoices over

whisperings, Satan will lose hope and give up his practice because he cannot tolerate a believer to rejoice. In the first place, he had cast the whisperings to cause him worry and grief. When he sees him rejoicing over the whisperings, he will give up casting them inside his heart. In addition to this, rational happiness over whisperings will strengthen the heart. This strength in itself will help the seeker to repulse whisperings. When they are repulsed, the natural grief will also disappear. In this way, rational happiness will be the cause of natural happiness.

The Author's Own Experience

I [the author] personally experienced this. When I am grieved by whisperings, my heart feels very weak. This results in even more whisperings, causing severe damage to me. After I am rationally at ease with this matter, I acquire natural peace of mind as well. Allāh forbid, these whisperings are not because of evil beliefs. After experiencing this peace of mind, the whisperings are either repulsed completely or at least reduced. Just recently I had a light fever which caused a severe inundation of useless whisperings on my heart and mind. This caused me intense worry and grief. When I mentioned it to my respected teacher, Maulānā Sirāj Aẖmad S̱āẖib, he – based on his own experience - supported my suspicion that it was because of the light fever. He said: "It is certainly because of the fever." After explaining it according to medical principles, I was fully convinced that the light fever is definitely the cause of these whisperings, and – Allāh forbid – not evil beliefs. The moment I became convinced of this, my doubts were repulsed and my natural retraction was replaced by expansion and cheerfulness. The cheerfulness then strengthened the heart which repulsed the fever. Sorrow is by and large the cause of a light fever.

In short, medical conditions also cause an inundation of whisperings. This is especially so with regard to weakness of the heart, mind and a light fever which cause useless and imaginary thoughts and immerse a person into baseless thoughts. Sometimes, grief caused by whisperings also results in medical conditions, which in turn result in an increase in whisperings. In essence, a medical condition is sometimes a cause, and whisperings the effects of it. And sometimes, whisperings are causes, and medical conditions their effects. A

person should also consult a medical doctor in such situations. Hadrat Wālā often gives this advice to those who are experiencing such conditions. But he adds: "No matter what the cause of unintentional whisperings, a person is neither taken to task for them nor should they cause fear and grief. Although natural worry and grief are not reprehensible – in fact, they are signs of īmān – a person must rationally keep himself unconcerned so that his natural grief disappears and it does not cause him worry."

Change Of Thoughts Is Also Beneficial

From my personal experience as described above, I also realized that whisperings and fears are repulsed by the changing of thoughts. Hadrat Wālā emphatically states that it is immensely beneficial for a seeker to meditate over this: "Allāh *taʿālā* loves me." In fact, Hadrat Wālā goes to the extent of saying that even if your condition is not worthy of Allāh's love for you, then in accordance with the following Hadīth Qudsī, you must have this good thought that Allāh *taʿālā* loves you. The words of the Hadīth are:

أنا عند ظن عبدي بي

I treat My servant according to his thoughts about Me.

The signs of Allāh's love for you are also present. After all, He made you a Muslim, blessed you with concern for Dīn, and conferred you with natural grief over detestable whisperings. This is a clear indication of īmān. Meditation over Allāh's love for you has other spiritual benefits. This is not the place for details. Another major benefit of it is that this meditation is not only a powerful and proven method of repulsing whisperings and fears, but an essential treatment for it. The reason for this is that because of evil whisperings, a seeker imagines himself to be very far from and disliked by Allāh *taʿālā* because of his fear and ignorance. This is certainly not the case.

Thus, based on the principle of treatment through opposites, the treatment for this baseless thought is to meditate over the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* loves you. In the present condition, this is in fact in accordance with the reality because whisperings and fears are experienced only by believers and accepted servants of Allāh *taʿālā*; not by unbelievers and those who are rejected by Him. The reason for this is that Satan is fully at ease with

the unbelievers and rejected ones because they are totally subservient to him in deviation. Now that he has immersed them in such a serious danger, what is the need for him to put them through whisperings which are certainly not harmful in Dīn?

As for the believers and accepted servants of Allāh *taʿālā*, Satan is always after them and is bent on leading them astray through whisperings, or, at least, causing them worry in this regard. So you should never allow him to fulfil his desire. In other words, consider – rationally – evil whisperings to be evil and never attach yourself to them by your choice. And never permit them to take the form of actions and deeds, neither at present nor in the future. Instead of being saddened by whisperings, consider them to be signs of īmān and be rationally satisfied and happy with them. Think to yourself: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* my beliefs are correct."

Practise on the procedures outlined by Hadrat Wālā in section two (mentioned previously). Be fully at ease with yourself and remain occupied in dhikr, acts of obedience, the essentials of Dīn and worldly essentials without giving any consideration to whether you have an inclination to carry them out or not. In fact, as per the teaching of Hadrat Wālā, lawful worldly engagements should also be carried out because they also act as shields against evil whisperings.

An Excellent Treatment For Whisperings And Fears

6. Never become occupied in trying to repulse whisperings or else they will inundate you even more. Satan is like a dog – the more you run out of fear from it, the more it will bark and run after you. If you do not bother about it in the least, by neither fearing it nor running from it, it will fall silent automatically and go away.

Therefore, an excellent treatment for whisperings is to pay no attention whatsoever to them. Immersing oneself in whisperings and worrying about them increases worry, it does not treat it. This results in an excessive inundation of whisperings. Although there is absolutely no Dīnī harm in their inundation – they do not entail sin because they are unintentional – they cause immense psychological harm. The procedures which we explain to repulse them are shown to

repulse this harm, and not because they are sinful. After all, it is not good to put yourself into undue hardship and stress.

Hadrat Wālā adds that whisperings are sometimes caused by fastidiousness and extreme perceptiveness.

They are also caused by medical conditions, evils of the self, Satanic influences, sins, and as a test from Allāh *taʿālā*. Sometimes more than one of these causes combine. In such a situation, when the cause cannot be identified, all treatments are brought together. However, in every situation, apart from specific treatments, the best treatment of all is not to pay any attention whatsoever to the whisperings and to abstain from delving into the whisperings and their causes.

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to evils of the self: "One is not taken to account for capabilities to commit evil because these are not within one's choice. Yes, he is punished for actions which are within his control. So all a person has to do is not to allow himself to act on the demands of evil capabilities. He must not worry about trying to rid himself off the evil capabilities because they cannot be removed. Yes, they do become weak through striving and repeatedly acting against the self.

The reason for this is that capabilities are innate, and innate capabilities do not change. However, actions and deeds are not innate. A person has control over them. He must allow them [actions] to be committed, and not grieve over why his innate capabilities are the way they are. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator and also the All-Wise. There are countless wisdoms behind whatever He does. Moreover, who is there who does not have evils of the self?! Almost everyone has them, except whom Allāh *taʿālā* wills not to have.

This is because this is how the self is structured. However, as long as those evils are not brought into action by one's will, and they are not brought into the open through actions, a person is not taken to task for them. For example, a matchstick has all the components to cause it to ignite and burn, but as long as it is not struck, a person can keep it in his pocket and walk about without any fear. Yes, he has to be always cautious that it does not strike against anything which would ignite it.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's Treatment

7. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had given a unique treatment for whisperings and fears. He said: "Think to yourself: Allāh *taʿālā* has made the heart like a turbulent ocean in which waves of whisperings strike incessantly all the time. Look at Allāh's power! Look at Allāh's manufacture!" After quoting this statement, Hadrat Wālā said: "Glory to Allāh! What a fine and subtle treatment! The whisperings which the seeker was considering to be means of driving him away from Allāh *taʿālā* have been turned into reflections of Allāh's beauty and causes of His proximity."

I [the author] consider it appropriate to quote another subtle treatment of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib which he had written for Hadrat Wālā bearing in mind the latter's lofty condition and elevated rank. This was quoted previously in the section where Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's letters to Hadrat Wālā were listed. A part of it is quoted here:

> …when you experience anything in your heart, consider it to be from Allāh *taʿālā*. Those that are harmful will be repulsed by this meditation. (Letter no. 45, dated 19 Rajab 1316 A.H.

A Prerequisite For The Above Treatments To Be Effective

By the help and grace of Allāh *taʿālā* we come to the end of Hadrat Wālā's written and verbal treatments for whisperings and fears. We now quote an essential precautionary note of Hadrat Wālā himself with regard to all these treatments. Hadrat Wālā issued this precaution with much concern after this entire section was read to him. This precautionary note is essential, in the absence of which this entire section on the treatments for whisperings and fears will be incomplete. The precautionary note is:

A prerequisite for these treatments to be beneficial is that they must never be done with the intention of treatments for the repulsing of whisperings and fears. Rather, they must be considered to be independent beneficial actions. At the same time, the person must not wait for the results, i.e. for the repulsing of whisperings to take place. If he waits for the results, it will result in hastiness, hastiness will cause a demand or pressing need, and this will result in apprehension. How can whisperings be repulsed in the presence of

apprehension? Instead of waiting for the whisperings to be repulsed, a person must be totally prepared and think to himself: "Even if my entire life passes without salvation from whisperings, I am not bothered. I am going to continue doing what I have been ordered to do. I am not accountable for anything more." And in every condition and situation, firmly believe and be conscious of this fact and essential belief that Allāh *taʿālā* is the absolute controller and the all-wise Being.

Since Allāh *taʿālā* is the absolute controller, He does as He wills to His servants. No one has the right to object. Since He is the all-wise Being, we must be fully convinced that every action of His is based on absolute wisdom even though we may not know the details of this wisdom.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* we now complete the second section on treatments for retraction and fear. We now present the third section.

Third Section

This section contains meditation on and consciousness of certain Qur'ānic verses, Ahādīth, and a repetition of some poems of men of insight.

Qur'ānic verses

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

Allāh does not burden anyone except what he can bear. He receives what he has earned and on him befalls what he did.[1]

Repetition of the following supplication:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا اِنْ نَّسِيْنَا اَوْ اَخْطَأْنَا، رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا اِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا، رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ، وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا اَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِيْنَ.

O our Sustainer! Take us not to task if we forget or err. O our Sustainer! Place not upon us a heavy burden as You had placed on the people before us. O our Sustainer! Make us not bear that burden for which we have no strength. Pardon us, forgive us and

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 286.

have mercy on us. You alone are our Sustainer. Help us against the unbelievers.[1]

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوْبَنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً، اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

O our Sustainer! Do not swerve our hearts after You have already guided us. Bestow upon us mercy from You. You alone are the giver of all things.[2]

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا اَنْفُسَنَا وَاِنْ لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِيْنَ

O our Sustainer! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and show mercy to us, we will most certainly be among the losers.

Allāh *taʿālā* said in verse 284 of Sūrah al-Baqarah: "If you reveal what is in your minds or conceal it, Allāh will call you to account for it." Outwardly it means that we will be taken to account for the concealed matters of our selves as well. But this does not refer to unintentional matters. Man will only be taken to task for matters which are within his control. Allāh *taʿālā* does not make any person accountable (for injunctions of the Sharīʿah). In other words, He only labels as obligatory or unlawful those matters which are within man's power (and will). He is rewarded for what he does by his will and intention, and is punished for what he does by his will and intention. (He is not answerable for what is beyond his power, and for that in which there is no will and intent). There is neither reward nor punishment for it. Whisperings are beyond one's control. It is neither unlawful for them to enter the heart nor obligatory to prevent them from entering. And there is no punishment for them.

Note: Anyone wanting additional details on this verse must refer to the last section of Sūrah al-Baqarah in *Bayān al-Qur'ān*.

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 8.

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن الله تجاوز عن أمتي ما وسوست به صدورها ما لم تعمل به (أي ما دام لم يتعلق به العمل إن كان فعليا) أو تتكلم (إن كان قوليا). متفق عليه

Abū Hurayrah ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates that Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said: "Allāh* taʿālā *overlooked the whisperings which are in the chests of my followers as long as they do not put them into action (if the actions are with regard to actions and deeds) or do not utter them (if they are to do with words).*

وعنه قال: جاء ناس من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فسألوه: إنا نجد في أنفسنا ما يتعاظم أحدنا أن نتكلم به. قال: أو قد وجدتموه؟ قالوا: نعم. قال: ذاك صريح الإيمان. رواه مسلم.

Abū Hurayrah ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu *said: Some Companions came to Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *and said: "We experience some thoughts within ourselves which we consider to be too serious to speak about." He asked: "Have you started experiencing that?" They replied: "Yes." He said: "That is a clear indication of īmān."*

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم جاءه رجل فقال: إني أحدث نفسي بالشيء لأن أكون حممة أحب إلي من أن أتكلم به. قال: الحمد لله الذي رد أمره إلى الوسوسة. رواه أبو داؤد.

Ibn ʿAbbās ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates that a man came to Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *and said: "I experience certain thoughts which cause me to prefer becoming charcoal than speaking about them." Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said: "All praise is due to Allāh who reverted his matter to whisperings." (narrated by Abū Dāwūd)*

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يأتي الشيطان أحدكم فيقول: من خلق كذا، من خلق كذا؟ حتى يقول من خلق ربك؟ فإذا بلغه فليستعذ بالله وولى عنه. متفق عليه.

Abū Hurayrah ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates that Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said: "Satan will come to you and ask you: 'Who created such and such thing? Who created such and such thing.' He will continue posing this question until he asks: 'Who created your Sustainer?' Once he reaches this question, you must seek refuge in Allāh* taʿālā *and turn away from Satan."*

وعنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (في مثل هذا) فمن وجد من ذلك شيئا فليقل امنت بالله ورسله. متفق عليه

Abū Hurayrah ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates that Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said in a similar <u>H</u>adīth: "Whoever experiences that must say: 'I believe in Allāh and His Messengers.'"*

وعنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (في مثل هذا) فإذا قالوا ذلك فقولوا: الله أحد، الله الصمد، لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد. ثم ليتفل عن يساره ثلاثا، وليستعذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم. رواه أبو داؤد. (مشكوة، باب الوسوسة)

Abū Hurayrah ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates that Rasūlullāh* <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said in a similar <u>H</u>adīth: "Whoever experiences any of this must say: 'Allāh is one. Allāh is all-independent. He did not beget nor was He begotten. He has no equal to Him.' the person must then spit three times to his left side and seek refuge in Allāh* taʿālā *from the accursed Satan." (narrated by Abū Dāwūd)*

قال النووي فقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذاك صريح الإيمان معناه استعظامكم الكلام به صريح الإيمان، فإن استعظام هذا أو شدة الخوف منه ومن النطق به فضلا عن اعتقاده إنما يكون ممن استكمل الإيمان إيمانا محققا وانتفت عنه الريبة والشكوك إلى قوله وقيل معناه إن الشيطان إنما يوسوس لمن أيس من حيث شاء ولا يقتصر في حقه على الوسوسة بل يتلاعب به كيف أراده، فعلى هذا معنى الحديث سبب الوسوسة محض الإيمان أو الوسوسة علامة محض الإيمان، وهذا القول اختيار القاضي عياض.

وأما قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم فمن وجد ذلك فليقل امنت بالله، وفي الرواية الأخرى فليعذ بالله ولينته، فمعناه الإعراض عن هذا الخاطر الباطل والإلتجاء إلى الله في إذهابه، ونقل عن الإمام المازري قال ظاهر الحديث أنه صلى الله عليه وسلم أمرهم أن يدفعوا الخواطر بالإعراض عنها

والرد لها من غير استدلال، وإلا نظر في إبطالها إلى قوله لما كان أمرا طاريا بغير أصل دفع بغير نظر في دليل، إذ لا أصل له ينظر فيه، وقال في معناه إذا عرض له هذا الوسواس فليلجأ إلى الله تعالى في دفع شره عنه وليعرض عن الفكر في ذلك، وليعلم أن هذا الخاطر من وسوسة الشيطان، وهو إنما يسعى بالفساد والإغواء فليعرض عن الإصغاء إلى وسوسته وليبادر إلى قطعها بالإشتغال بغيرها.

Imām Nawawī rahimahullāh *said: When Rasūlullāh* sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *said: "That is a clear indication of īmān", it means: The fact that you consider it a serious matter to even speak about it is a clear indication of īmān. This is because considering it to be a serious matter, intense fear of it or speaking about it – let alone believing in it – stems from a person who has perfected his īmān and has no doubts and misgivings in this regard.*

Another meaning is that Satan only whispers to the one in whom he has lost hope. He does not restrict himself to whispering to him. Rather, he plays around with him in an effort to deviate him. Based on this explanation, the Hadīth would mean that absolute īmān [in the person] was the cause of whisperings. Or, the whispering is a sign of absolute īmān. This is the preferred view of Qādī ʿIyād.

As for the words: "Whoever experiences this must say: I believe in Allāh'", and in another narration: "He must seek protection in Allāh and be on his guard", this means that the person must turn away from this baseless whispering and turn to Allāh taʿālā *to remove the whispering.*

Imām al-Māzirī said: "The obvious meaning of this Hadīth is that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *instructed them to repulse the whisperings by turning away from them and refuting them without seeking any proof and without looking at how to refute them." He adds: "Since this is a temporary condition without any foundation, it must be repulsed without delving into it. After all, it has no basis which a person has to look into." He also said with regard to its meaning: "When he experiences these whisperings, he must seek protection in Allāh* taʿālā *to repulse the evil of the whispering from him, he must abstain from thinking too deeply about it, and he must realize that it is from Satan who is striving to delude and deceive him. He should therefore abstain from paying any attention to Satan's whisperings and hasten in cutting them off by occupying himself in other matters."*

Poems

By Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*

1. When one has high aspirations, hardships are converted into comforts.

2. O heart! You will suffer whisperings if you come out of hardships and come into comforts.

3. If gratitude is ingrained in you, you will not consider anything to be a failure. Everything will be considered to be the will of the Beloved.

4. O my life! Even His displeasure becomes His pleasure. May my heart be sacrificed for my Beloved who causes me pain.

5. I am intensely in love with mercy and anger. How surprising! I love two opposites!

6. When you experience grief, turn to seeking forgiveness immediately. If you have come here by the order of the One who creates grief, you may work here.

7. Remain patient over the calamities of time. Also be grateful for the bounties of that all-powerful Being.

8. Look at the creation and designing of Allāh *taʿālā* and give up your plotting and planning. The plotting and planning of the greatest plotters are useless before His designing.

9. Since your plotting is obliterated in the creation and designing of Allāh *taʿālā*, O you who are drowning in confusion, make a place of refuge for yourself.

10. The person who takes refuge in this place will acquire permanency which will remain in progress and loftiness forever.

11. Strive to enter this place of refuge so that you may acquire divine knowledge.

12. When He restricts you to one place, remain restricted. When He releases you, you must become energetic and alert.

13. Do not go down the alleys of despair because there are many hopes. Do not go towards darkness because there are countless suns.

A Supplication by Hadrat Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*

14. O King of the beautiful! We are beseeching You from the sorrow of solitude. Without You, the heart is on the verge of death. This is the time for You to come back.

15. O You whose pain contains my cure on this bed of failure. O You whose remembrance brings me love in my solitude.

16. We are points of a compass on the circle of divine decree. Whatever You decide is solely through Your kindness. Whatever You say is Your order.

17. My heart is soaked in the blood of this intoxicated circle. Give me a drink so that I may solve this problem through this goblet of drink.

18. I have no place of refuge in this world apart from Your court. My secret is known to none except this court.

19. The darkness of separation caused my life to reach my lips in the dark night. It is now the time for You to come into me like the luminous moon.

20. In my remorse over not seeing You, I am giving away my life like the morning. It may well be that You will come out like the bright sun.

21. I am adhering to the dust at Your threshold waiting for Your gaze to settle on me. It may well be that You will appear like the cypress.[1]

A Consoling And Comforting Ode

22. Do not worry, the lost Yūsūf [*ʿalayhis salām*] will return to Kanʿān one day. Do not worry, the grief-filled house will become a garden one day.

23. The condition of this sorrowful heart will change. So do not make the heart despondent. The mad man will return with the possessions, do not worry.

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[1] The cypress tree is normally used to describe gracefulness.

24. The ups and downs of time will continue, and the desired day will arrive as we would like. Do not worry, time never remains the same.

25. Since you do not have knowledge of the unseen, you should not lose hope. Do not worry, there are many games behind the curtains.

26. Anyone who wandered worriedly in the world and did not find anyone to console him will eventually find a sympathizer. So do not worry.

27. If, in your enthusiasm to go to the Ka'bah, you walked into the jungle and the thorns are pricking you, even then you must not worry.

28. Although the path is very dangerous and the destination is not appearing, every path is not an endless path. So do not worry.

29. O heart! If a destructive flood uproots the very foundation of your existence, you have a sailor like Hadrat Nūh *'alayhis salām* for your ship. So do not worry.

30. O you sweet-voiced bird! If the spring of life remains, you will be perched on the flower at the edge of the garden.

31. O Hāfiz! Do not worry as long as you are able to sit in the corner of your room of solitude and are able to engage in dhikr, prayer and recitation of the Qur'ān in the dark nights.

□

32. The good news has come that the days of grief are not here to stay. If those conditions will not remain, then these conditions too are not permanent.

33. This is not the place to complain and be grateful over bad and good conditions because no one ever remains in eternal grief.

□

34. O heart! Remain steadfast on patience. Do not worry because the morning always follows the night, and the night always ends with the dawn.

35. O Hāfiz! Do not fear because that Yūsuf [*'alayhis salām*] of Egypt will come back, and you will come out of your grief.

36. Do not cry and sob out of grief. I have drawn a good omen and there is someone who is going to respond to your call.

37. O H̲āfiz̲! Be patient over the difficult conditions. There will certainly come a day when you will realize your objective.

38. No matter what a seeker has to face in the path of Sufism, it is best for him. O heart! No one goes astray as long as he remains on the straight path.

39. O H̲āfiz̲! There will come a day when you will acquire a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* provided you have the strength to wait.

An Advice In The Form Of An Ode

40. Lovers do not have the choice to instruct their own selves. They will only do what You say to them.

41. O heart! Come out of your anger and be happy because the confidant spends a good time in the dish of separation.

□

42. There is a major difference between the lover and the beloved. When the beloved displays coquetry, you must display your devotion.

43. By the life of the beloved, your grief will not tear the curtain provided you have full faith in the Real Doer.

□

44. An ignorant person reaches the seven heavens through his wealth. But the righteous do not reach the seven heavens without begging and beseeching.

45. O H̲āfiz̲! Be patient because the one who sacrifices his life in the path of love does not reach his beloved.

□

46. If a gardener wishes to spend five days among the flowers, he will have to be patient over the thorns of separation like the nightingale.

47. O heart! Do not beg and beseech out of grief over your imprisonment in her hair-locks. An intelligent bird has to remain patient when it gets caught in a net.

48. If this mad heart desires those hair-locks, it will have to bear the coquetry of that intoxicated beloved.

49. The one who needs a face like the jasmine and hair-locks like the hyacinth,[1] it is unlawful for him to look at ordinary faces and hair-locks.

50. It is an act of unbelief to rely on one's piety and deeds in the path of Sufism. If a traveller possesses even one hundred excellent qualities, he must place his trust in Allāh.

51. Do not become distressed if you experience grief on any day. You should rather be grateful that it does not go from bad to worse.

52. People say: Rocks turn to pearls after a person exercises patience. Yes, they do turn to pearls but only after shedding the blood of your heart.

53. I am begging at the house of love and requesting justice. It may well be that my heart receives salvation from the hand of grief.

54. O lover! If you desire union [with your beloved], then do not grieve. You will have to drink your blood [experience difficulties] at all times.

55. Some are given a goblet of wine, others are given the blood of the heart. This is how divine decree works.

56. You must desire to acquire your objective by acting against your habit because I have to acquire peace of the heart from these distressed hair-locks.

57. O heart! You are a slave, so do not complain to the king. Complaining about more and less is not appropriate for love.

58. Do not bother about dirty and clean. Just remain silent. Whatever our cup-bearer has given us is solely out of his kindness.

59. Do not worry about colour and fragrance. Just drink the drink because nothing but the intoxicating drink [of love] can remove the rust of your heart.

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[1] A plant having a sweet fragrance to which the Persians compare the hair-locks of their sweethearts.

60. O Hāfiz! Live your life with the pain of love and keep silent. Do not reveal the secrets of love to the rationalists.

61. O Hāfiz! Do not be distressed by the autumn winds in the garden of time. Think with your intelligence that you do not get flowers without thorns.

62. O Hāfiz! Lower your head before the threshold of submission because if you were to fight it, then time will also fight you.

63. O heart! You seem to like the company of comfort. But remember that the wing of love is dear; do not leave it.

64. O Hāfiz! If this path could be crossed by the feet of yearning, no one would have given the reins of separation to the hands of separation.

65. I am the one who treats love, so take this drink because this concoction will satisfy you and put an end to the grief of calamity.

66. None can solve my problems except the drink which is the colour of fire.

An Encouraging Ode

By Shaykh Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*

67. Quite some time has passed since anyone loved my ways. A grief of this nature is a source of happiness for my grief-stricken heart.

68. O my Sustainer who is the object of visiting this Ka'bah! The thorns of this path are flowers and buds for me.

70. Making myself into a slave for Your sake is more appealing to me than kingship because the humiliation of Your oppression is a source of honour and high rank for me.

71. The one who has been brought up and nurtured in comforts and vanities cannot find the path of the Beloved because love is the work of those who are inundated by calamities and hardships.

72. An irresolute moth does not have the courage to burn its wings. Weak people cannot carry out acts which demand the sacrificing of their lives.

73. O heart! Move away because love is no play and amusement. The ball of love cannot be thrown with the stick of desire.

74. I am inclined towards union [with Allāh *taʿālā*] while His will is separation. I have abandoned my desire so that the will of my Beloved can be fulfilled.

75. Although your heart is immersed in blood, come with smiling lips. It should not happen that if you are injured, you must make a noise like a flute.

76. Do not worry about separation and union. You should rather seek the pleasure of your Beloved because wishing for anything else is a blemish.

77. The ups and downs in the jungle of love are nets of tribulation. Where are the brave ones who do not fear tribulations?

78. If the high waves of calamities reach the skies, a Gnostic does not allow his provisions of good fortune to get wet by the water.

79. You ought to go dancing beneath his sword of grief because the one who is killed at his hands reaches a good end.

80. O Hāfiz! In my search for the pearls of union [with Allāh *taʿālā*], it will be most appropriate for me to turn my eyes into oceans of tears and to dive into them.

By Hadrat ʿAttār *rahimahullāh*

81. A seeker has to be patient and forbearing because I have not heard of any alchemist becoming fed up.

82. If you are a true lover, then lose yourself. If not, take control of the path of wellness.

83. Do not be fearful of love reducing you to dust. Once it destroys you, you will enjoy eternity.

84. Those who are madly in love have such a wonderful time! If they suffer one injury, they consider the other to be its balm.

85. They continually drink the drink of pain. They remain silent even when they find it bitter.

86. The prisoner of love does not want freedom from it. The one who is caught in its net does not want to be released from it.

87. Patience will give you success. Pain and hardship will give you freedom.

□

By Nawāb Mustafā Khān Sāhib

88. If you are awaiting happiness, there is nothing apart from patience at the time of calamity.

□

89. If you desire a few moments of comfort you will have to live by shedding the blood of your liver, breaking your heart to pieces, and burning your life.

90. O nightingale! Your abode is in the heart of the flower. Ask it to burn your nest with fire and wind.

91. You are shedding the flowers of meeting the beloved under the wing of love. Spend one night crying and beseeching to Allāh *taʿālā* and you will experience the next morning with a thousand joys.

92. O you remorseful one! Do not grieve. The heart is a true witness to the fact that this house of grief will become a house of joy.

93. Wait, do not complain, and do not be angry at the house of love. The promise of union is not deserving of demands.

□

94. What is love? Say it is to become the slave of the beloved. It means handing over the heart to another and living in bewilderment.

95. It entails staring at her hair-locks and looking at her face. You will have to rejoice sometimes, and be worried on other occasions.

□

96. I am selling my head in exchange for the sword of your demeanour. I am selling my liver in exchange for the tip of your arrow.

97. In order to get out of the cage (jail) of captivity, the captive aiming for the orchard is prepared to sell his feathers and wings.

□

98. If you keep me alive, it is your bestowal. If you kill me, I am still sacrificed for you. My heart is enamoured by you, so you can do as you like.

99. Although I am lying at a distance, I am happy over the hope that my beloved will hold my hand once again.

100. Sometimes there is happiness and sometimes grief. But you do not know from where this happiness and grief has come.

By the help and grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the third section on the treatment for retraction and fear is now concluded.

Forty Points For The Spiritually Injured

1. Tribulation is from among the essentials of Sufism

In most cases the descent of tribulation is generally from the essentials of Sufism.

2. The norm of Allāh

It has been the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* with most seekers to cause them to experience retraction and expansion, fear and hope, fear and affinity, ascent and descent, and increase and decrease during a major portion of their lives. Their hearts – which are manifestations of the True Beloved – continually receive the beauty of Allāh *taʿālā* sometimes and His power at other times.

3. How to put an end to whisperings

As far as possible, a seeker must resort to fortifying tonics and refreshing practices in order to strengthen and relax the heart. As far as possible, he must abstain from distressing causes so that the heart remains strong and he is able to bear such conditions. A sorrowful incident which is beyond one's control (e.g. the death of someone) is from among the strong causes of

distress to the heart. This is irrespective of whether the sorrow is because of one's own pain, out of concern for another or the effect of the definite or assumed consequences of an incident playing in one's mind all the time or speaking about it verbally. In other words, to wilfully think about it and delve into it or to speak about it a lot. This causes considerable damage to the heart and results in its distress and perplexity. Although it is not within one's control to be naturally saddened by a gory incident and also not harmful, thinking of it all the time and speaking about it repeatedly is certainly within one's control and also harmful. Just as bringing it into existence or its continuation is within one's control, its removal is also within one's control. The manner of doing this is to occupy the heart in some important obligation.

I added the condition of "excessive" in my prohibition to thinking of a sorrowful incident. This is because to abstain from talking about it completely and "bottling" oneself totally from the incident have also proven to be harmful. When all the dust and murkiness remain "bottled" inside all the time, it causes a withdrawal in one's temperament and the strength to fight the sorrow decreases. It would therefore be wise to occasionally speak about the sorrowful incident in the beginning in a balanced manner and within the limits of the Sharī'ah to a religious-minded well-wisher. This is also supported by Ahādīth. (These were quoted previously)

When showing your concern for another, ensure it is within the limit. The limit is that it must benefit the other without harming your own self. Thus, a rational concern is sufficient. A natural concern must be kept within the limit to the extent that it is needed for the rational concern to be effective. Do not allow it to go beyond this limit. If not, experience has shown that it too is harmful. Too much of concern and feeling sorry for another disturb the heart. Sometimes this results in thoughts which are contradictory to accepting divine decree, and this is most dangerous.

Do not go to extremes in abstaining from permissible occupations and do not opt for total solitude so that the heart is prepared for such things which would prevent fears of this nature from entering it. If a person wants to remove the air which is in a bottle, a simple way of doing it is to fill it with water. Air will neither remain inside nor will it able to enter.

The same applies to the heart. When witnessing the unseen [benedictions of Allāh *taʿālā*], lawful occupations act as shields against fears. It is common sense that the self cannot focus totally and equally on two things at the same time. However, it should be borne in mind that this does not include increasing one's love for these lawful occupations because love for them is also harmful. Mere organizational interactions and diversions are enough. For example, arrangements for one's livelihood, a little recreation, reading history books, and so on.

The best way of putting an end to intense and prolonged fears is to disregard them totally. Do not even turn your attention towards them. In fact, do not even turn to them with the intention of repulsing them. You should rather turn your attention to dhikr and occupy yourself in it. But here too, do not go to extremes in your attention to it and don't be overenthusiastic. If you persist in doing this, you will get tired and bored and the fears will start taking a toll on you.

4. Beneficial meditations

From the statements of H̱aḏrat H̱ājī S̱āẖib *raẖimahullāh*:

(a) Whatever thought enters the heart, consider it to be from Allāh *taʿālā*. Those that are harmful will be repulsed through this meditation.

(b) Think to yourself: Allāh *taʿālā* has made the heart like a turbulent ocean in which waves of whisperings strike incessantly all the time. Look at Allāh's power! Look at Allāh's work of art!

5. Consider whisperings to be external

An advice from H̱ājī Sayyid Muẖammad ʿĀbid S̱āẖib Deobandī *raẖimahullāh*

You must think to yourself that these fears are not entering your heart but leaving it. When a thief gets into a house in order to steal, his eyes are still focused on the door. If he starts to flee after hearing the house people waking up, he is seen at the door.

6. An overwhelming spiritual condition does not negate excellence

The spiritual masters are also overwhelmed by spiritual conditions occasionally. This does not negate their excellence.

7. A man of high rank does not transgress the limit

When a man of rank is overwhelmed by a spiritual condition, he does not move out of the limits. On the other hand, a man of spiritual conditions occasionally goes beyond the limits. However, he is not sinning in this condition because he is not accountable for what he does during this overwhelming condition.

8. The conditions of a man of rank are spiritual

A man of rank also experiences certain conditions but there is subtleness in them because they are spiritual. On the other hand, the conditions experienced by a man of conditions stem from the self, and they are weighty.

9. A person who experiences retraction and fear certainly goes through severe distress, but this does not cause any harm in traversing the path.

10. There are graces in whisperings

In certain types of retraction, the whisperings contain subtle graces of the Merciful. They are:

(a) The person does not have self-conceit. He realizes that he is in a bad condition.

(b) He is always trembling. He does not pride over his knowledge and deeds. He has seen the reality of his knowledge and deeds and realizes that they are nothing.

(c) Once he experiences this obstacle, it develops strength in him to combat Satan. He does not fear Satan because he cannot do anything more than what he already did. Without having passed through this phase, a person of fragile disposition fears every harmful company.

(d) If he were to experience this condition suddenly at the time of death, he would become distressed and die with various detestable thoughts. But if he went through this tribulation, he develops the strength to bear it. If he experiences it again at the time of death, he might become distressed but will not have evil thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*. He will give his life out of love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

(e) This person becomes a master himself. It becomes easy for him to steer and guide others who are suffering in the same way.

(f) He sees Allāh's mercy on him all the time. He thinks to himself that he is receiving so many bounties from Allāh *taʿālā* despite being so unworthy.

(g) He personally sees the truth of the Hadīth which says that forgiveness is not based on actions but on the mercy of Allāh *taʿālā*.

11. A cause of retraction

There are many reasons for retraction. One of them is when a person does more than what he can bear.

12. Retraction is superior to expansion

The spiritual masters consider retraction to be superior to expansion. Evil traits and characteristics are better treated through retraction. Almost all seekers experience this condition. They then get salvation from it and progress further.

13. Neither is burning love a sign of excellence nor is dryness an indication of imperfection

The burning enthusiasm and yearning which you consider to be an excellence is not so. The dryness and whisperings which you consider to be a blemish is not so.

14. Intentional and unintentional actions

Remember this general principle: You must not act against Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in actions which are within your choice. Thereafter, no matter what conditions you experience – since they are not of your choice – you must not bother in the least about them. Continue doing what you have to; you are not deprived. You yourself will establish the truth of this at some time in the future. For the time being, accept what I am saying. (quoted from a letter)

15. There are many benefits in retraction

This is that condition which is my heartfelt desire to be experienced by my associates provided it is accompanied with insight and fortitude. Its benefits are countless. There are many other benefits of this condition. The essence of all is

obliteration of one's self. The expansion which is experienced after it is also unparalleled.

16. Benefits are only realized later on

Although benefits are not realized at the exact time of retraction, most of them are learnt later on. Even if they are not learnt, they are certainly acquired. Acquisition is the objective and not knowledge of the acquisition. Don't worry at all. Do as much as you can even if you have to compel yourself and even if you have no interest in doing it. The spiritual practices which are burdensome may be reduced, but increase seeking forgiveness for as long as this condition remains. Continue informing me once or twice a week. Everyone experiences this condition. In fact, I get happy because it is a sign that you are traversing the path. These are all obstacles in the path. (quoted from a letter)

17. Witnessing the reality of servitude

These changes (changes in conditions) are natural and to do with the self. They are not spiritual and not related to the heart. So instead of being harmful, they are beneficial. A person is able to observe the reality of servitude in this condition. Self obliteration and humility are visually seen. It is worth looking at actions which are within one's control during such times, and they are tests. If you pass this test, you will be eligible for the highest marks.

18. The wisdom behind retraction and fear

A seeker becomes distressed when he looks around and finds that the path is closed to him from all sides. Whereas the underlying reason behind it is that Allāh *taʿālā* wants him to lose hope from all sides and to turn to Him alone. Sealing off this door is not meant to separate himself from Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, Allāh *taʿālā* wants to rescue him from Satan and take him under His refuge. Allāh *taʿālā* puts the seeker through this constricted pass so that he may be protected against the internal destroyers of self-conceit and pride. Had he not been treated in this manner, he would have become trapped in the web of evils of the self and destroyed himself in the process.

19. Useful books

The following books of Hadrat Wālā must be studied:

(a) *Khātimah bi al-Khayr*
(b) *Al-Ibtilā' li Ahl al-Istifā'*
(c) *Khayr al-Akhbār fī Khabar al-Akhyār* (which has been printed towards the end of *Kamālāt Ashrafīyyah).*
(d) *Tabwīb Tarbīyyatus Sālik*, chapter five.

20. The reality of fear

Fear is really an unwitting turning of the self towards an evil.

21. Fear and worry are from among the lofty and blessed conditions. If you end in this way it will be the greatest form of martyrdom. However, the Sunnah demands that you make balance and moderation your fundamental basis for as long as your knowledge and strength can support you. Be conscious of affinity with fear, hope for mercy with worry and evil thoughts about one's self, continuity with obliteration, existence with non-existence, and observation of bounties with exaggeration in humility.

22. Read *Allāhummaghfhfirlī* excessively

When you experience excessive fears and evil thoughts about yourself then think that we are defective and sinners in every condition. Just as the true servants of Allāh *taʿālā* will receive salvation, the same will apply to those who repent. If we do not get the most prominent seat, we will at least get a place in the back where the shoes are placed. If we do not get the first prize, we can at least hope for salvation after being beaten. After understanding this, you must engage in excessive repetition of *Allāhummaghfirlī* (O Allāh forgive me). (quoted from a letter)

23. When you are overcome by retraction, you must study *Iksīr Hidāyat (Tarjumah Kīmiyā-e-Saʿādat*) or the chapter on hope for Allāh's mercy from the book *Thalāthīn (Tarjumah Arbaʿīn*). You must study these repeatedly.

24. Reprehensible conditions

There are two conditions which are reprehensible; sinning and heedlessness. As for overwhelming enthusiasm, this is a temporary condition and its absence is neither harmful to the seeker nor can it remain exactly as it is forever. The obstacles which you suspect are mere assertions and nothing else. You must remain occupied in your work with ease and comfort. The heart is certainly weakened by worry and this can be harmful. (quoted from a letter)

25. You are neither ill nor do you need treatment

You are neither ill nor do you need treatment. However, because you are not conversant in this field, you are not aware of your own health. Even this is not harmful. (quoted from a letter)

26. Different reasons for retractions

There are several reasons for it (retraction) and its treatment also varies. If you have not committed any sin and did not intermingle with outsiders, then the reason for it is that you are being put through a test. Resort to reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and patience, and engage in seeking forgiveness. Study my *Mawāʿiẕ* and *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. Allāh's mercy will be showered on you.

27. Remain silent

Continue doing whatever is within your control. Do not be vexed by what is not in your control and do not make any plans for it. Just hand over the matter to Allāh *taʿālā* and remain silent.

28. Whisperings should not cause worry

Whisperings should not cause any worry. Worry weakens the heart and results in a double worry. The only thing to do in such a situation is to disregard the whisperings totally and to pay no attention to them. In fact, it will be better to be happy over them. This would strengthen the heart, It rejects the whisperings, and they are cut off very quickly. If there is no sin in them, why should you worry? Although natural pain and worry are not detestable – and are really signs of īmān – one must remain rationally unconcerned. In this way, the natural worry will wane and will not cause any grief.

29. A simple treatment for thoughts

A simple treatment for this is that when you are overwhelmed by such thoughts, you must wilfully direct yourself towards a good act and remain directed towards it. If, after this, the thoughts still remain or new thoughts come to your mind, then they are certainly beyond your will because two opposing thoughts cannot come together at one and the same time by your own will. Your confusion is thus removed. If you are wilfully neglectful in directing yourself towards good thoughts,

then be warned: neglect is atoned for through seeking forgiveness, and you must then be conscious of the above procedure. This procedure is extremely easy. There is no simpler procedure. Make it your practice and do not worry in the least.

30. Reward for fears

A seeker must neither be worried by detestable fears nor consider himself to be rejected [by Allāh *taʿālā*] because of them. These are whisperings which are cast by Satan in the heart. So what sin did he commit!? In fact, he will be rewarded for the harm which he is suffering because of his detestation.

31. No punishment for fears

In most cases, it is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that when a person attains total proximity with Him, whisperings come to an end. If, due to certain reasons and special wisdoms, they do not come to an end, the person must still not become worried because there is absolutely no punishment for unwitting whisperings and they are certainly not sins.

32. The make up of the heart

Allāh *taʿālā* has made the heart such that all types of thoughts – good and bad – enter it. No one has the right to demand only good thoughts to enter it, and to completely ban evil thoughts.

33. The place of fears

Fears do not occur within the heart itself but remain around it. As for what is thought to be within the heart, they are not whisperings but their effects and their reflections. The only thing which occurs within the heart is firmly-embedded belief, and not fear which is nothing but an assumed and superficial thing.

34. Fears – a sign of īmān

Satan only casts whisperings in a heart which has īmān.

35. A beneficial meditation

Hadrat Wālā emphatically states that it is immensely beneficial for a seeker to meditate over this: “Allāh *taʿālā* loves me.” In fact, he goes to the extent of saying that even if your condition is not worthy of Allāh’s love for you, then in accordance with the Hadīth Qudsī - I treat My servant according to his thoughts

about Me - you must have this good thought that Allāh *taʿālā* loves you.

36. Fears are only experienced by believers

Fears are only experienced by believers and accepted servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. They are not experienced by unbelievers and rejected ones.

37. Do not consider fears to be evil

Consider – rationally – evil whisperings to be evil, and never attach yourself to them by your choice. Never permit them to take the form of actions and deeds, neither at present nor in the future. Instead of being saddened by whisperings, consider them to be signs of īmān and be rationally satisfied and happy with them. Think to yourself: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, my beliefs are correct. Practise on the procedures outlined in point number 29. Be fully at ease with yourself and remain occupied in dhikr, acts of obedience, the essentials of Dīn and worldly essentials without giving any consideration to whether you have an inclination to carry them out or not. In fact, (as mentioned in point number 3), lawful worldly engagements should also be carried out because they also act as shields against evil whisperings.

38. A comprehensive treatment for whisperings

Whisperings are sometimes caused by fastidiousness and extreme perceptiveness. They are also caused by: medical conditions, evils of the self, Satanic influences, sins, and as a test from Allāh *taʿālā*. Sometimes more than one of these causes combine. In such a situation, when the cause cannot be identified, all treatments are brought together. However, in every situation, apart from specific treatments, the best treatment of all is not to pay any attention whatsoever to the whisperings and to abstain from delving into the whisperings and their causes.

39. The darkness of whisperings

Although whisperings cause a type of natural darkness, every darkness does not prevent one from traversing the journey when the means are correct. For example, a train also moves in the darkness by having its windows shut. As long as the train driver can see and he is on the line, this is enough.

40. A prerequisite for treatment

A prerequisite for these treatments to be beneficial is that they must never be done with the intention of treatments for the repulsing of whisperings and fears. Rather, they must be considered to be independent beneficial actions. At the same time, the person must not wait for the results, i.e. for the repulsing of whisperings to take place. If he waits for the results, it will result in hastiness, hastiness will cause a demand or pressing need, and this will result in apprehension. How can whisperings be repulsed in the presence of apprehension? Instead of waiting for the whisperings to be repulsed, a person must be totally prepared and think to himself: "Even if my entire life passes without salvation from whisperings, I am not bothered. I am going to continue doing what I have been ordered to do. I am not accountable for anything more." And in every condition and situation, firmly believe and be conscious of this fact and essential belief that Allāh *taʿālā* is the absolute controller and the all-wise Being.

Since Allāh *taʿālā* is the absolute controller, He does as He wills to His servants. No one has the right to object. Since He is the all-wise Being, we must be fully convinced that every action of His is based on absolute wisdom even though we may not know the details of this wisdom.

Clarification Of A Doubt

The themes which are contained in the booklet, *al-Ghaybah fī al-Haybah*, are from the writings and statements of Hadrat Wālā. Although they are the results of his independent investigations – after all, independent investigation is a prerequisite for a reformer in this field – it should not be misconstrued that he is unique in these investigations. Rather, they are supported by the independent investigations of past imāms in this field. The statements of Imām Qushayrī *rahimahullāh* (d. 465 A.H.) on these three objectives – explanation of events, explanation of wisdoms and explanation of treatments – are quoted here as examples. He writes:

لزوم ابتلاء عادةً: واعلم ان في هذه الحالة قلما يخلو المريد في أوان خلوته في ابتداء إرادته من الوساوس.

حكمة ابتلاء: وهذا من الإمتحانات التي تستقبل المريدين.

إشتداد ابتلاء: واعلم أنه يكون للمريدين على الخصوص بلايا من هذا الباب، وذلك أنهم أدخلوا في مواضع ذكرهم أو كانوا في مجالس سماع أو غير ذلك يهجس في نفوسهم ويخطر ببالهم أشياء منكرة يتحققون أن الله سبحانه منزه عن ذلك، وليس يعتريهم شبهة في أن ذلك باطل ولكن يدوم ذلك فيشتد تأذيهم به حتى يبلغ ذلك حدا شكون أصعب شتم وأقبح قول وأشنع خاطر بحيث لا يمكن المريد إجراء ذلك على اللسان وإبداؤه لأحد، وهذا أشد شيء يقع لهم.

علاج ابتلاء: فالواجب عند هذا ترك مبالاتهم بتلك الخواطر واستدامة الذكر والإبتهال إلى الله عز وجل باستدفاع ذلك وتلك والخواطر ليست من وساوس الشيطان، وإنما هي من هواجس النفس، فإذا قابلها العهد بترك المبالاة بها ينقطع ذلك عنه.

Tribulations are generally inevitable: You should know that rarely does a murīd not experience whisperings during his early days of solitude.

Wisdom: These are one of the tests which murīds have to encounter.

Severity of tribulations: You should know that the murīds specifically face tribulations in this regard. This is because they introduced in their places of dhikr, in their assemblies of samāʿ, etc. reprehensible matters which come to their minds and occur to them. They know that Allāh taʿālā *is pure from such matters and they have no doubt whatsoever about the falseness of such matters. However, these thoughts continue, thereby intensifying their distress and eventually causing them to complain about the worst of abuses, the most reprehensible statements and the most repugnant thoughts which the murīd cannot even utter or express. This is undoubtedly the severest condition which they experience.*

Treatment: When this happens, it is essential for them to disregard those fears, to continue in the remembrance of Allāh taʿālā *and to beseech Him to repulse them. These fears are not the whisperings of Satan but apprehensions of the self. When he combats them by disregarding them totally, they will be repulsed automatically.*

The quotation from *Qushayrīyyah* ends here. Although there is a difference in the length of explanation between Imām Qushayrī and Hadrat Wālā – the reason being the difference in the understanding and intelligence of the addressees, which a

speaker normally has to consider – the conformity in the independent investigation of a latter scholar [Hadrat Wālā] with that of a scholar of the past [Imām Qushayrī] is an accepted proof of the accuracy and acceptance of that investigation. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Apology: The subject matter of *al-Ghaybah fī al-Haybah* was most important and its discussions required much investigation. The reader must have gauged this. We were therefore forced to go into many details despite our efforts to be as brief as possible. Hadrat Wālā himself emphasised the need for conciseness repeatedly and removed many themes which were not intrinsically related to the subject. Despite this, the discussion became quite long.

Anyway, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, many facts and intricate points on Sufism came to light in the course of this discussion. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. The benefit and importance of this concise article can be gauged from the fact that when it was compiled, Hadrat Wālā remarked with absolute joy: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, this article is unparalleled on this subject." He also expressed his wish for it to be printed separately. All praise is to Allāh *taʿālā*, this article contains rare investigations, intricate points, practical and rational treatments on the conditions of retraction, fears and whisperings. It is filled with all aspects of this subject. Even if it is printed separately, it will – Allāh willing – be most useful for the seekers and those treading the path of Sufism who by and large experience these conditions. Allāh willing, it will prove most beneficial to those who are suffering from fears and whisperings.

I myself have personally experienced the extreme benefit of it. Coincidentally, in the course of writing it I experienced a severe feeling of retraction which was brought about by an inundation of baseless fears. Hadrat Wālā referred to it as a good coincidence because I got a lot of help and ease from writing this article. Thereafter, through the blessings of recalling Hadrat Wālā's treatments, thinking about them, writing them down, and practising on them as per need resulted in this restrictive condition to disappear. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, I learnt many beneficial and enlightening rational and practical principles with regard to conditions of this nature. I hope to be cognisant of them all the time and be

able to practise on them so that – Allāh willing – I will never have to experience such distress in the future. All matters are in Allāh's control.

Hadrat Wālā's treatments, viz. meditating with good thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* and being rationally conscious of the correctness of one's beliefs acted as elixirs for me. Both these treatments proved to be antidotes. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. May He bless me with steadfastness and keep me on the straight path forever through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā. Āmīn.

يا مقلب القلوب ثبت قلبي على دينك. اللّٰهُمَّ اهدني وسددني. اللّٰهُمَّ اعطني ايمانا لا يتردد، ويقينا ليس بعده كفر، ورحمة انال بها شرف كرامتك في الدنيا والآخرة. رب اعوذ بك من همزات الشيطان واعوذ بك رب ان يحضرون. ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد اذ هديتنا وهب لنا من لدنك رحمة، انك انت الوهاب. اللّٰهُمَّ ارنا الحق حقا وارزقنا اتباعه، وارنا الباطل باطلا وارزقنا اجتنابه. اللّٰهُمَّ اني اعوذ بك من الشك في الحق بعد اليقين، واعوذ بك من الشيطان الرجيم، واعوذ بك من شر يوم الدين، آمين ثم آمين، يا رب العالمين، بحرمة سيد المرسلين صلى الله عليه واله واصحابه اجمعين.

O Turner of hearts! Keep my heart firm on Your Dīn. O Allāh! Guide me and keep me steadfast. O Allāh! Bless me with īmān which does not waver, conviction which is not followed by unbelief, and mercy through which I can obtain the honour of Your generosity in this world and the Hereafter. O my Sustainer! I seek refuge in You from the whisperings of Satan and I seek refuge in You from their coming to me. O our Sustainer! Do not cause our hearts to deviate after You have guided us. Bestow on us mercy from Yourself. You alone are the Giver. Enable us to identify the truth as the truth and inspire us to follow it. Enable us to identify falsehood as falsehood and inspire us to keep away from it. O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from doubting the truth after being convinced about it. I seek refuge in You from the accursed Satan. I seek refuge in You from the evil of the Final Day. Āmīn. Āmīn. O Sustainer of the universe. Through the sanctity of the Chief of the Messengers sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. *Salutations to him, his family and all his Companions.*

This is just one small example of the benefit and blessings of Hadrat Wālā's teachings. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep his shadow of affection with graces and blessings over the heads of the

Muslims for a long time to come with absolute wellness and peace. Āmīn.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* I experienced another blessing in the course of writing this article, viz. I had the honour of seeing Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *quddisa sirruhu* in a dream. I said to Shāh Sāhib: "I am experiencing many whisperings from Satan. Pray for me that I receive perfect īmān." He said: "Your shaykh is a very senior shaykh. You are the murīd of Maulwī Ashraf ʿAlī." He added with reference to whisperings: "A train has to move in the darkness as well. It moves with its windows closed."

The interpretation of this dream is obvious. When I wrote to Hadrat Wālā and described the dream to him, he explained it as follows:

> Although whisperings cause a type of natural darkness, every darkness does not prevent one from traversing the journey when the means are correct. For example, a train also moves in the darkness by having its windows shut. As long as the train driver can see and he is on the line, this is enough.

This explanation of Hadrat Wālā is in itself a separate and fine investigation on the subject of fears. It ought to be borne in mind as a form of treatment.

Conclusion

All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* for enabling an unworthy person like myself to complete this detailed explanation of Hadrat Wālā's most special lofty spiritual condition, viz. the overwhelming fear which he experienced. This was made possible through Hadrat Wālā's blessings, prayers, attention, corrections and guidelines. This also brings us to the end of the chapter on Pledge of Allegiance and Spiritual Abundance. Contrary to our expectations, this chapter ended very well.

After going through this entire volume, Hadrat Wālā addressed an unworthy person like myself with genuine affection and approval and said: "Māshā Allāh, you described all these conditions as though you were present with me at every step of the way." All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. My inspiration is solely from Allāh *taʿālā*. May He bestow me with a good end through the blessings of what I wrote. May He pardon me for

whatever mistakes and errors I committed in the course of writing this volume, may He crown it with the honour of acceptance, make it a source of goodness and blessings for the seekers and a means of atonement for my evil deeds and actions. Āmīn.

آمين ثم آمين، يا رب العالمين، بحرمة سيد المرسلين صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه وأتباعه أجمعين.

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات

The English translation of this, the first volume of *Ashraf as-Sawāni<u>h</u>* was completed on 04 Dhū al-<u>H</u>ijjah 1434 A.H. corresponding with 10 October 2013. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā.*

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

Mahomed Mahomedy
Durban, South Africa

SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION

The Compiler Is At A Loss

I am confused as to how I should start the chapter and how I should end it. There are several reasons for my confusion:

1. This is the most important of all the chapters because its theme – spiritual instruction – is the soul of this biography and the essence and objective of Hadrat Wālā's life. It therefore needs special attention for which I neither have the time nor can it be expected from an ignorant, heedless, disorganized, lazy and easy-going person like myself.

2. It is most certainly not the job for an immature and useless person like myself to write about the spiritual instruction of a reviver of Dīn and Muslims, a lighthouse of instruction and a specialist physician who laid bare the centuries' old academic and practical errors, showed the straight path to the Muslim community, placed thousands of deviated ones onto the right path of Sufism and connected them to Allāh *taʿālā*.

3. Even if I were to compel myself into merely noting whatever I heard from Hadrat Wālā, read from his writings or heard from those who were associated with him, and just wrote them down in my own broken words without consideration to any special sequence, I would still be confused as to what I should write and to what extent. At present, I can say without exaggeration that the following scene comes before me:

> No matter where I look at from his head to toe, the pull of his beauty draws my heart towards him because this is the most beautiful place.

4. The biggest reason for my confusion is that the countless peculiar traits of Hadrat Wālā's spiritual instruction are quite well perceived by the heart and their effects are firmly embedded and preserved in the mind, but I do not find the words to express them and I cannot make others perceive them through words. A poet says:

> Although the artist may be able to capture the beauty of the beloved who has captured my heart, I am at a loss as to how he will portray her airs.
>
> It is not only the attraction of these airs and graceful ways, rather, people of beauty have thousands of beautiful ways which cannot be described.

Based on the above reasons, I feel that instead of writing something on this subject, I ought to address my self as follows:

> Break your pen and throw away the ink. Burn the paper and keep silent because your love story cannot be contained on pages.

I feel I should say to the reader:

> My heart knows and I know, and my heart knows.

And that I should merely write this one short sentence in this chapter: "The obvious needs no explanation" because H̲ad̲rat Wālā's method of spiritual instruction is visible to the entire world, is more brilliant than the sun, and which the world has recognized and acknowledged. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, H̲ad̲rat Wālā's many writings which are filled with his statements and teachings have been published and are well known in all places and lands. His associates and disciples are also spread out in large numbers in the East and West. Another spiritual master of his calibre is not visible anywhere else. This is an undeniable fact.

In short, I would have certainly acted on this natural demand of mine, but I have no alternative because if I were to do this, the essential subject matter of this biography would be left out. It is therefore essential for me to write something, even if it is incomplete and insufficient. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Rūmī *rah̲imahullāh* addresses H̲ad̲rat Maulānā H̲usām ad-Dīn *rah̲imahullāh*:

> Your rank is beyond the comprehension of intellects.
> The intellect is useless in describing you.
>
> Although the intellect is useless in this regard, there has to be some effort in this regard – even if it is a weak effort.

As the Arabic saying goes:

ان شيئا كله لا يدرك – اعلموا ان كله لا يترك

If a matter cannot be fathomed in its entirety, it should at least not be given up totally.

A poet says:

> Although the storm of the clouds cannot be drunk, we cannot give up drinking water totally.
>
> Although sea water cannot be drawn, it ought to be drunk according to one's thirst.

Hadrat Wālā's Encouragement

When I presented these difficulties of mine to Hadrat Wālā, he said: "Just sit down and start writing whatever disjointed thoughts come to your mind. Allāh willing, the ideas will come automatically to you. Do not ponder and think too deeply. As long as you look at a river from a distance, it seems difficult to cross. Once you take the name of Allāh *taʿālā* and start walking, and reach the bank with the intention of crossing it – Allāh willing – you will see a ship there, a sailor to steer it, favourable winds and calm waves. In short, you will find all types of ease present before you and all obstacles removed."

Hadrat Wālā's encouraging glad tidings strengthened my weak courage. After hearing this blessed statement, I experienced strong hopes in the very world of despondency and felt that if I sit down to write, I will certainly be able to write something through Allāh's help and Hadrat Wālā's blessings and prayers. I therefore place my trust in Allāh *taʿālā* and commence writing whatever little I can and however I can on this subject. I am now closing my eyes and immersing myself in this shore-less ocean.

> We have cast our heart. It can only move and stop in Allāh's name.

May Allāh *taʿālā* help me and enable me to accomplish this task.

Completion Of Spiritual Abundance

The previous chapter, Pledge of Allegiance and Spiritual Abundance, was concluded on the subject of Hadrat Wālā's condition of retraction and fear. If we look at Hadrat Wālā's

conditions collectively, this was his last obstacle in the path of Sufism. By the help of Allāh *taʿālā* and the prayers and attention of the elders, Hadrat Wālā passed this valley and, so to say, traversed all the stages of spiritual abundance. Once he became fully perfect in this regard, he became – through Allāh's inspiration - forever engrossed in spiritual instruction with full force and vigour.

In short, after recovering from the above-mentioned condition, his period of spiritual abundance ended and his period of spiritual instruction commenced formally. This resulted in large numbers of seekers reverting to him, crowds of people assembled in the Khānqāh to engage in Allāh's remembrance, and Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī's wish which he had expressed on hearing about Hadrat Wālā's academic acumen was realized. He had said: "I will only be happy when some people who engage in Allāh's remembrance begin assembling there."

Maulānā Hakīm Mustafā's Dream

During this period, Hadrat Wālā's righteous student and senior khalīfah, Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Mustafā Sāhib Bijnaurī, saw a dream. It is quoted from *Asdaq ar-Ru'yā*:

> I saw a dream on 3 October 1901/Rajab 1319 A.H. when I was in Murādābād. This was during the early stages of Hadrat Wālā's living in the Khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan. I saw Hadrat Wālā delivering a lesson to students in the southern section of the Khānqāh in Thānah Bhawan. It was the time of tahajjud, the moon was out and there was a unique type of tranquillity. The time of tahajjud ended, the students completed their lesson and left the class to make preparations for salāh. The smell of musk was emanating from their mouths. I said: "A fortified supplement ought to be prepared for these students." Hadrat Wālā said: "The supplement of *mash-shā'īn* has been prepared for them." My eyes opened thereafter.

When the Maulānā wrote to Hadrat Wālā and related this dream to him, he wrote the following reply:

> As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. It is a very good dream. The fragrance is of knowledge and dhikr which the servants of Allāh

> *taʿālā* are occupied in here [in Thānah Bhawan]. The *mash-shā'īn* refers to those treading the path of Sufism. Walking (*mashy*) and treading are close in meaning. You saw yourself with them [students]. This is a great glad tiding for you. Was salām. That is all.

The dream was seen 35 years ago. The Hakīm Sāhib was very kind to search for the original letter which was written by Hadrat Wālā. He found it and sent it to me. It is in front of me at the moment.

Maulānā Anwār al-Hasan Kākaurwī's Dream

I recall another dream which was related to me quite some time ago by Maulānā Anwār al-Hasan Kākaurwī who is the son of the well-known ode-singer, Maulānā Muhsin Kākaurwī *rahimahullāh*. He related this dream to me in Thānah Bhawan. It clearly demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's rank in the field of spiritual instruction and abundance. I am therefore quoting it here as further support. The Maulānā said:

> During my hajj journey, I dreamt of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī when I was in Madīnah Tayyibah. I had no special contact or link with Hadrat Maulānā at the time and my family too did not have much affinity with the genuine and true 'ulamā'. Yes, I did consider him to be a senior scholar. Hadrat Maulānā was not even in my remotest thoughts while I was in Madīnah Tayyibah. I dreamt that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was lying down on a straw mat. He was ill and Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī was nursing him. Another elderly person was sitting at a distance and I gauged in the dream itself that he was a doctor.

After relating this dream to me, the Maulānā added: "The moment my eyes opened, the interpretation which came to my mind was that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not ill, rather it was his community and followers who were ill. And Hadrat Maulānā was nursing the Muslim community, i.e. rectifying and reforming it. But I could not work out who the elderly doctor who was sitting at a distance was. On my return to India, I described this dream in a letter and the interpretation which came to my mind, and sent the letter to

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā. I also mentioned the fact that I could not understand who the elderly doctor was who was sitting at a distance.” H̲ad̲rat Maulānā replied in his letter to me: “He is H̲ad̲rat Imām Mahdī *ʿalayhis salām*. Since the time for his arrival is still far, he was seen sitting at a distance.”

Three Dreams Of Maulānā Muh̲ammad H̲asan Amritsarī

Maulānā Muh̲ammad H̲asan Amritsarī is a very reliable scholar and from among the special associates and spiritual representatives of H̲ad̲rat Wālā. He saw three dreams which are of special merit. I feel I have to quote them from *As̲daq ar-Ru’yā*. All three are quoted in the Maulānā’s own words.

First Dream

I went to H̲ad̲rat Wālā’s Khānqāh for the first time in 1340 A.H. The first night or second night after my arrival I saw a dream in which the upper section of a grave was dug near the centre of the courtyard of the Khānqāh Musjid. The upper section of the grave was partially dug. A small tent was pitched over the grave. Shaykh al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Shāh Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib Muhājir Makkī *quddisa sirruhu* was lying in the grave and appeared to be very weak. H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī S̲āh̲ib asked for water which was brought in an extremely beautiful flask whose neck and spout were very long and attractive. It was not made of clay but of some valuable gem stone. I never saw such a beautiful and attractive flask in my life. H̲ad̲rat sat up, and because the grave was not deep, his head and neck became visible. He now appeared to be quite strong. He drank the water and when I looked at the wall on the eastern side of the grave, I saw the following words written in a large font: “If you wish to gain the closeness of Allāh *taʿālā* then become like the dog of the road.”

In the dream itself I learnt that the “court” referred to the “court” of H̲ad̲rat Wālā where he was instructed to work. In the same dream, I saw H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Rashīd Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* and H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Qāsim S̲āh̲ib Nānautwī *quddisa sirruhu* appearing from inside the Musjid. Their heads were bent towards each other as they were speaking privately with each other. They were making reference to H̲ad̲rat Wālā and saying that his views on the movement of opposition [to the British] were most correct. One

of them then went back into the Musjid while the other came out.

Second Dream

About three or four years ago I saw the following words written on the bathroom wall of the Khānqāh. The wall was becoming black with mildew, while the words were written with lime or some other very white ink. The words were: "The heart is washed here and also purified."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a comprehensive essence of Hadrat Wālā's method of spiritual instruction presented in such a fine theme from Allāh *taʿālā* in this dream.

Third Dream

I saw the Kaʿbah and the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the centre of the Khānqāh Musjid. The two were very close to each other. The Kaʿbah was most probably nearer to Hadrat Wālā's out sitting room. The blessed grave was in the shape of the Kaʿbah, i.e. without a dome. Both were covered with a beautiful green cover, the like of which I never saw. Rays of light seemed to emanate from them. Hadrat Wālā was standing near the Kaʿbah; I never saw him so happy and cheerful. He was holding a branch of a date palm which was formed into a broom and was about to go and sweep the area around the Kaʿbah and the blessed grave.

A Visual Experience Of Maulānā Hāfiz Muhammad 'Umar Alīgarhī

There are many other glad tidings of this nature which demonstrate Hadrat Wālā's high rank in the field of spiritual instruction. Some of them were related previously. I consider it appropriate to relate an exposition which was experienced by a Sufi in this regard.

Maulānā Hāfiz Jalīl Ahmad Sāhib is a Ra'īs from ʿAlīgarh. He is a khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā and is presently in the permanent service of Hadrat Wālā. Maulānā Hāfiz Muhammad ʿUmar ʿAlīgarhī *rahimahullāh* was a senior Sufi and a khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā. He relates that Hāfiz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* arrived by the night train to Thānah Bhawan. When the train passed in line with the Khānqāh, he saw a line of light extending from the dome of the Khānqāh Musjid to the heavens. He saw this in a state of wakefulness.

General Acceptance

These were incidental accounts in support of our actual objective. The actual objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that after Hadrat Wālā recovered from the conditions of retraction and fear, and perfected his spiritual abundance, the period of his spiritual instruction commenced with full force. Seekers began reverting to him in large numbers. The masses and the elite became so inclined towards him that he began receiving requests from far off places not only to deliver lectures but to merely visit them. Details in this regard were given in the chapter on sound admonition. Large numbers of those engaged in Allāh's remembrance used to join him on his journeys. The fascinating and charming sounds of dhikr makes one to experience the joy of the Khānqāh both on journeys and at home. I myself experienced this on several occasions and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Every lecture of Hadrat Wālā was like a complete lecture on Sufism through which the objective and the Sufi way would be made absolutely clear and a genuine quest would generally develop in the hearts of the people.

Hadrat Wālā Would Not Accept Bay'ah While On A Journey

Many people would request him to induct them in the spiritual family but Hadrat Wālā would generally refuse while on a journey by saying: "I want to teach practically that people must abstain from travelling Sufis." He used to say: "Faith in a person which is developed merely by listening to his lecture is not worthy of consideration because a lecture only contains good points. Yes, faith which is developed after observing daily actions and practices is worthy of consideration. And this can only be acquired after observing a person at his place of residence. Anyone who is desirous of pledging bayʽah to me must come to my hometown so that both sides are able to observe each other. Moreover, this will also be a test of a person's quest and thirst. In short, there must never be hastiness in the matter of bayʽah. It is not a transaction involving carrots and radish where the buyer hands over money and purchases an item."

Glory to Allāh! Look at his integrity and sincerity. Superficial Sufis are on the look out for disciples. In fact, they undertake journeys in order to trap people towards themselves. Look at

the correctness of Hadrat Wālā's criterion for faith and confidence in a shaykh.

Hadrat Wālā always says: "If a person comes here and hears my prerequisites for bayʿah, observes my method of rectification, and then departs without having achieved his objective, he will at least realize that bayʿah is not an ordinary matter. He will realize that it also has certain prerequisites. If he sees the opposite in any superficial Sufi, it will certainly cause a tremor in his heart. This realization in itself entails the fulfilment of a great objective."

Hadrat Wālā often quotes one part of a couplet composed by myself on such occasions:

> Even the one who is deprived in this house of love is
> not left deprived.

Consideration To The Sick And To Women

Hadrat Wālā was not in the habit of accepting bayʿah while on a journey but he used to accept the requests of women and sick people. Sick people deserve to be shown mercy, while women do not have opinions of their own. Their faith is simple, uncomplicated and genuine.

A Testimony From The Heart

In addition to women and sick people, Hadrat Wālā would not refuse the requests of those about whose genuineness he was convinced through their conditions and life situations. The secret behind this is that he was able to immediately perceive affinity or lack of it by virtue of his insight. There are countless astounding examples of this nature which we observe all the time. Hadrat Wālā says: "My heart immediately accepts some people and not others. If a person were to ask me the reason, I am never able to tell him. It has occurred to me on numerous occasions that a person looks like a drunkard, of fearless disposition, neither performs salāh nor keeps fast, is an open and flagrant sinner; yet my heart inclines towards him. On the other hand, you get a person who appears reliable, who is regular with his salāh and other devotional acts; but my heart does not incline towards him even if I try to. Now what can I do? My heart is not under my control, and it is deceitful to accept bayʿah when there is no inclination from the heart because the person cannot benefit from me in such a case.

Although I do not understand the reason for the inclination or disinclination of the heart at the time, in most of the cases I learn later on from incidents and conditions that the testimony of my heart was correct."

"The fact of the matter is that when Allāh *taʿālā* wants to take work from a person, He confers him with understanding of that work. It is not my personal excellence. Sometimes my heart lowers itself towards a person the moment I set my eyes on him and I spontaneously feel he must request me for bayʿah. Within a few days I see him personally coming to me and requesting bayʿah. I do not refuse such a person. The moment I hear his request, I accept it silently. I say to my heart: 'Do not say anything to him. Allāh *taʿālā* sent him to me in fulfilment of my wish.'"

Treating Each Person According To His Condition

I [the author] personally witnessed many incidents related to the correctness of the testimony of Hadrat Wālā's heart. There were occasions when Hadrat Wālā did not consider pity to be appropriate while I – by merely looking at the outward condition – requested pity for the person, personally showed pity to the person or expressed a lenient opinion. But later, my opinion proved to be totally wrong and my request was shown to be misplaced. Hadrat Wālā would say to me: "Look! You have now learnt that my opinion was correct. No one must interfere with my opinion when it comes to matters of rectification and training. When I treat a person in a particular manner, all my associates must realize that this treatment is most suited for him. Since Allāh *taʿālā* has entrusted me with this task, He guides and steers me. I myself am nothing; I am a nonentity."

Insight

After countless observations and experiences, I have reached the point of absolute certainty that whatever treatment Hadrat Wālā metes out to a person is most appropriate and conducive to that person. In fact, I have even witnessed him treating the same person in different ways on different occasions. This too proved to be most appropriate to the situation and really necessary for rectification. I experienced this quite often and it really astounded me. I was convinced that Hadrat Wālā was a man of divine expositions but he emphatically denies it. Anyway, these incidents certainly prove Hadrat Wālā's

receiving of divine help, his correct disposition and feelings, and the fact that he was an embodiment of the Hadīth:

اتقوا فراسة المؤمن فإنه ينظر بنور الله

Beware of the insight of a believer for he looks with the light of Allāh.

These virtues are far greater than divine expositions.

The Incident Of How I Pledged Bay'ah

The above themes were mentioned incidentally. What I was discussing previously was that Hadrat Wālā was not in the habit of accepting bayʿah while on a journey. But if he was satisfied and expected affinity from both sides, he would accept requests for bayʿah. I was fortunate to be one of those whose requests were accepted during his journey to Allāhābād in 1326 A.H. I feel it would be appropriate to relate it in some detail because other important points which are relevant to this chapter will also be learnt.

Interest In Hadrat Wālā's Writings

My father had pledged allegiance to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* through correspondence and, acting under his instruction, he learnt the Sufi way under Hadrat Wālā. Through the blessings of my respected and deceased father, I had an attachment for Dīn although I was occupied in studying western education. I had come across some of the writings of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Hadrat Wālā and was very much affected by them. As for Hadrat Wālā's writings, Allāh *taʿālā* had placed a peculiar attraction in them which caused my interest to study them to grow all the time. The quest for Dīn adhered to me and my condition began changing by the day. There are countless testimonies to this.

A Letter To Hadrat Wālā

I clearly recall how a few close friends and I had developed a strong interest in Hadrat Wālā's writings and even went to the extent of opening a library. The main advocate for this was Janāb Munshī Haqdād Khān Sāhib, a pensioner teacher at Patwāriyā. He is presently a khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā, a very dedicated and blessed personality. The few of us got together and wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā in which we stated that we

learnt from his very own writings that when a person loves another, he must certainly inform him of it so that the latter would also reciprocate the love and remember the person in his prayers. This is why we are informing Hadrat Wālā that we love him.

Hadrat Wālā Comes To Allāhābād

All the above relates to before I could even meet Hadrat Wālā. I had completed my BA from ʿAlīgarh College and was studying law in Allāhābād College where I was admitted for LLB. I was living in the Kirah district at the time when I saw a printed poster announcing the lecture of Hadrat Wālā. I was so overcome by enthusiasm to see him that I walked for five miles in the intense afternoon heat and proceeded to the Madrasah which was attached to Musjid Shaykh ʿAbdullāh, near the large station where Hadrat Wālā was staying.

Hadrat Wālā was taking a siesta at the time. In my extreme love and enthusiasm for him, I remained standing at quite a distance and continued looking at him. Hadrat Wālā was sleeping with his back towards me, and his extremely beautiful glittering hair which was still totally black was displaying its beauty to me. In my efforts at trying to peek at him, I got a few glimpses of sections of his luminous face. My imagination and love for him caused his face to take on various attractive forms. Sometimes a particular form would appear before me, and sometimes another. I continued these repeated eager and searching glances but could not correctly ascertain what he looked like.

Hadrat Wālā was probably immersed in a dream at the time and I was immersed in looking at him with enthusiasm, yearning and love, and 28 years have passed since this incident, the entire scene in its exact form is still etched in my memory. The intoxicating effects of that incomplete view are still embedded in my heart. The simple and pure confidence and natural love of that time which did not even have any rational traces are still present in my mind. Although I was rationally consoled by Hadrat Wālā when he said that my present condition is better, more superior and more continuous than that first condition because rational conditions have a greater effect on the soul while natural conditions have an effect on the self, I am still desirous of that first condition. O Allāh! That was a time of real enthusiasm, yearning, simplicity

and sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* has power over everything. I pray to Him to combine both rational and natural conditions to perfection in my heart. Āmīn. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Wālā says: "Although good, unwitting, natural conditions are praiseworthy, they are not the objectives. There is no harm in praying for such conditions, but it is a sign of insincerity to await such conditions. Furthermore, they are harmful because they cause a person to lose focus and turn him away from his objective." He adds: "Rational conditions are not totally devoid of natural emotions. A rational demand alone is generally not enough for the carrying out of actions. The opposite also holds true. However, rationality is overwhelming in one condition while natural instincts are overwhelmed. And the opposite occurs in the second condition." After mentioning these intricate facts and useful points about Sufism, I return to relating the incident concerning my bayʿah.

The First Verbal Exchange

I did not have to wait too long to speak to Hadrat Wālā because the time of zuhr salāh entered soon thereafter, Hadrat Wālā came out to perform ablution and I had the opportunity of seeing him on his way out. As was his noble habit, his gaze was down and he was swaying slightly as he was walking. He had a regal face but his clothes were those of a fakir. He was wearing a kurtah and a pants. The top button of his kurtah was open, as is his norm most of the time to this day. A scarf was draped over his shoulders. His eyes were stained with antimony, they appeared bloodshot and, because he had just woken up from his sleep, his hair was a bit dishevelled. In short, he had a unique and captivating appearance.

I went forward, offered salām and extended my hands in order to shake his hands. He looked up, replied to my salām in a lovely tone, shook my hands with his extremely soft and broad hand, and asked me in a most affectionate and pleasing tone, "How are you?" That pleasing tone still echoes in my ears, his demeanour is still embedded in my heart, and the place where I cast my first glance at him is still before me. As for his awesome gaze and the lightning-like effect which it had on me, do not even ask me about it because I cannot describe it. Try to understand it through the following couplet:

> You have wounded my chest in such a manner that you have left no traces of it there. I am astonished at how you could shoot an arrow without a bow.
>
> You conquered me with your flattering gaze while I was thoughtless. May I be sacrificed for your gaze. Cast your gaze at me one more time.

The First Gaze Of The Shaykh

I do not consider this to be a poetic exaggeration because – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – I am clearly perceiving the effects of his attentive gaze at every turn in my life from that first day to the present day. I am announcing with full confidence that anyone who wishes can personally experience the effect of his gaze as it had been experienced by thousands of other people. The following couplets apply:

> The entire world is intoxicated by looking at your beauty. I pray to Allāh that the evil eye does not afflict you. You made us drink an exotic drink for free.
>
> I am not the only prisoner of his hair-locks. Rather, there is a separate prisoner for each and every strand of his hair.

However, as per the teaching of Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*, the following prerequisite applies:

> Empty your brains from rejecting the Beloved so that you too can get the fragrance from the garden of the Beloved.
>
> Once you have held on to Him, you must become totally obedient. Become totally obedient as was the case with Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* with Hadrat Khidar *ʿalayhis salām*.
>
> Do not utter a word if he damages the ship. Do not make the slightest objection if he kills the child.
>
> After all, Allāh *taʿālā* referred to his [Rasūlullāh's] hand as His hand – in fact, He said that His hand is over their hands.
>
> Whatever that personality who receives revelation from Allāh *taʿālā* says is absolutely true.

Lower your head before Him as was done by Hadrat Ismāʿīl *ʿalayhis salām*. Give your life happily before His sword.

Now that you have made him your shaykh, do not make your heart delicate. Do not become lazy and sluggish like mud.

If you are going to become angry over every injury, how will your heart be purified without having to go through hardships and difficulties!?

Since you do not have the strength to pierce with a needle, do not utter a word before such a brave lion.

O brother! Be patient over the pain which you experience from the sting so that you can gain freedom from the stinging of your wicked self.

Hadrat Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAttār *rahimahullāh* conveys it as follows:

O Farīd! Become true on the path of Sufism so that you may obtain the key to the treasures of recognition [of Allāh *taʿālā*].

O you who are searching for the path. Hold on to a guide and sacrifice whatever you have in this path.

Consider your shaykh to be the absolute king so that you may recognize the truth in the path of Sufism.

Become obedient to whatever he says and fill your eyes [opinions and views] with soil.

Listen attentively to whatever he says so that he does not have to order you to remain silent.

Depending on the various capabilities and inclinations, the effect of Hadrat Wālā's attentive gaze will be perceived immediately or changes and progress in one's external and internal conditions will certainly be observed as time passes. Allāh willing, the person will eventually sing out these couplets either verbally or by his condition:

May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you for having opened my eyes and making me aware of my Beloved.

You freed me from the evil of my self when you made me drink continuously from the goblet.

حماك الله عن شر النوائب، جزاك الله في الدارين خيرا

May Allāh taʿālā *protect you from the vicissitudes of time. May Allāh* taʿālā *give you the best of rewards in both worlds.*

The Spiritual Miracles Of The Shaykh

Hadrat Wālā constantly says this with absolute confidence: "The seeker who remains engrossed in his task constantly observes the spiritual miracles of his shaykh within himself. Therefore he has no real desire to witness the external miracles of his shaykh. If he does not witness these internal miracles even after a long time, he must search for another shaykh because this is proof that he has no affinity with his present shaykh."

Hadrat Wālā also says: "When sitting in your shaykh's assembly, you must direct your attention towards his heart even if he is occupied in some other task. You must then imagine that light is being transferred from his heart to your heart." He said on another occasion: "I do not impose on those sitting in my assembly to even pass me a note of a person who is sitting at a distance or to pass my note to such a person, unless if it is absolutely necessary. The reason why I abstain from doing this is that some people want to sit here with absolute and total focus and attention. Asking them to pass such notes affects their concentration and weighs heavily on their hearts. I know those who are of such a disposition and who sit so engrossed." He added: "I am also of the same temperament, but what can I do, I have to speak for the sake of those who are present in the assembly and those who have some need."

On one occasion he said with regard to the common assemblies of concentration: "What is the need for an assembly of concentration in a place where there is concentration all the time?"

He said with regard to a certain matter: "Here we only teach how to connect [with Allāh *taʿālā*]; we do not know what this Sufism is. We are students, we do not even possess knowledge. All we do is teach how to practise on the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Thereafter, whoever is to receive anything in this way receives it. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, when he receives it, it is something which no eye beheld, no ear heard of and no human

heart ever imagined. Outwardly it is nothing – there is no ecstasy, no fervour, no exposition and no miracle. I occasionally snap my little girl's knuckles, and I tell her to pinch my cheeks. Now look at this, is it the action of a Sufi? When we went on hajj, my father purchased fish which was caught from the sea. I thought to myself that it must have salt in its flesh, so it should be cooked without salt. Subsequently, it was cooked without any salt and was cooked very well. Although no salt was added, there was a suitable amount of salt in it. In the same way, the "salt" over here [in the Khānqāh] is not added from the top. It is inside and displays its saltiness after it is cooked. Only the person who eats perceives the saltiness. Similarly, a person who has never eaten a mango in his life cannot be made to understand its taste through mere explanations and similes. Its taste can only be perceived after it is eaten."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the fine manner in which Hadrat Wālā explained the crux of his unique methodology which is exactly in line with the Sunnah way. The erudite reader must have also ascertained Hadrat Wālā's power of beneficence and rank of instruction and training. This is the essential theme of the present chapter. The reader must have also gauged the extent of goodness which a person derives from Hadrat Wālā's company. Glory to Allāh! This is Sufism in its fundamental form which is totally in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and which the erudite Sufis of every era possessed, practised on and propagated. However, the explanation, generality and clarity with which it has proliferated in the present era through Hadrat Wālā was not realized for centuries before this. Countless astonishing and unique points, very beneficial and effective methods of training and rectification, and extremely simple and effective treatments for spiritual ailments which have been compiled and published in large numbers all bear just testimony to the fact that Hadrat Wālā is not just a Mujaddid but a very distinguished Mujaddid, and a super specialist physician of the Muslim community. This is the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Inspiring Gaze

All the above concerned the effect of Hadrat Wālā's inspiring gaze. A few incidents in this regard have come to my mind, so they are related briefly to serve as examples.

A man from Sītāpūr District spoke in praise of Hadrat Wālā's gaze in his own rustic language: "It is a very killing gaze." Another man from Khaurjah said: "Hadrat Wālā had looked at me just once a very long time ago. That gaze is embedded in my heart like a nail." Janāb Sufi Sulaymān Sāhib Lājpaurī *rahimahullāh* was an elderly and well-known Sufi shaykh of Gujarat. He met Hadrat Wālā by coincidence and it was a short incidental meeting. After meeting him, he went into a musjid, sat down and continued crying for a few hours. When he was asked the reason, he mentioned the name of Hadrat Wālā and said: "I do not know what he did to me with his eyes." This incident was related in detail under the chapter concerning Hadrat Wālā's meeting pious personalities and receiving their prayers.

During one of Hadrat Wālā's lectures in Kānpūr, my deceased brother happened to be sitting directly in front of Hadrat Wālā. Consequently, his gaze fell quite often on my brother's face in the course of his lecture. I noticed my brother regarding Hadrat Wālā with a fixed look and listening attentively to whatever he was saying. I realized that Hadrat Wālā's focus was on my brother, and thought to myself that – Allāh willing – its effect will certainly become manifest. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, it happened as I assumed. My brother was so much affected by Hadrat Wālā that he reverted to him and became extremely religious despite holding a high worldly position. He was occupied in Allāh's remembrance and left this world while reading the kalimah. A few other incidents with regard to the effects of Hadrat Wālā's lectures were related in the chapter concerning his sound admonition.

The Shaykh's Focus

Janāb Maulānā Muhammad Shafīʿ Sāhib Deobandī is a khalīfah of Hadrat Wālā and a teacher at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. I personally saw him sitting close to Hadrat Wālā in one of the latter's assemblies and becoming startled on several occasions from Hadrat Wālā's address. After the assembly, I

quoted to him a couplet which described Hadrat Wālā's lightning gaze.

> With his eyes he filled my veins and nerves with lightning. His gaze is like a sign of lightning.

In the beginning, I myself used to be affected to the extent that sometimes I would place my hand on my heart and – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – even now it removes my heedlessness and creates a union with Allāh *taʿālā*. If I were to maintain this continuously, I would eventually acquire the eternal treasure of affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*.

The Blessing Of Companionship

I am convinced that the blessing which is acquired from a shaykh's companionship is in most cases acquired through his focus and attention. In fact, even without his focus, the reflection of his affinity continually falls on the hearts of his disciples. Through this, heedlessness is removed and they begin to perceive the feelings of union with Allāh *taʿālā*. This results in abundance of dhikr and continuity in obedience which result in a daily progress in union and presence with Allāh *taʿālā*. Eventually, through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessing of the shaykh, firmly-embedded affinity which is the sum total of all the forms of dhikr, spiritual exercises and striving, is achieved. The seekers must therefore monitor their hearts all the time. If they do this, they will certainly perceive the focus and blessings of the shaykh within themselves. This will continually receive strength through abundant dhikr and continuous obedience, until firmness in it is achieved.

I see myself going towards heedlessness but through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā's focus, my heart directs me towards Allāh *taʿālā*. It seems as if an awakener is sitting inside my heart [to wake me up whenever I become heedless]. May Allāh *taʿālā* bestow me with the inspiration to protect myself from heedlessness. There is no shortage in His treasures, it is I who has shortcomings. I just remembered a statement of Hadrat Wālā. On one occasion, I said to him with absolute regret: "Hadrat, when I present myself before you, the condition of my heart is excellent. But when I leave here, it deteriorates gradually." He consoled me immediately with genuine affection by saying: "So what is the problem? When you make your

clothes dirty, the washer-man washes them clean. When you make them dirty again, he washes them again.”

In short, there are thousands of incidents portraying Hadrat Wālā’s alchemic gaze, the essence of which can be expressed in the following metaphor: He turned thousands of pebbles into sapphires, and countless rocks into *pāras*[1]and thereby made them manifestations of the following couplet:

> The moment steel touches the *pāras*, it takes the form of gold there and then.

The Prescribed Method Of Focus

When I observe the effects of Hadrat Wālā’s piercing gaze, I am convinced that he certainly makes the intention of his effect falling on the other person and that the conditions of his heart are conveyed to him – only then can his focus be so effective. In fact, I felt that he remains focused with his heart all the time towards the seekers because in most cases – while in his presence or in his absence – they suddenly perceive unique conditions without any external causes. However, Hadrat Wālā frankly stated the error of my feelings and said: “I do not have time to worry about my own self, how will I be able to turn my focus to others all the time?! I consider the well-known focussing to be a formality and deliver talks against it. I consider it to be permissible if it is done with the intention of benefiting others. It was on this basis that focussing one’s attention on another had been the practice of some of our elders. However, the manner in which it has become prevalent is not found in the Sunnah way.”

“Although I consider the well-known focussing to be permissible, I have a natural aversion for it – like the aversion for the stomach of an animal, although it is lawful to eat, some people cannot get themselves to eat it. I feel ashamed to turn my focus from everything else and direct it all the time to just one person who is a creation [of Allāh *taʿālā*] because this right is specifically the prerogative of Allāh *taʿālā* – we have to turn our attention from everything and everyone and direct it solely towards Him. However, to teach the seekers with pain and concern, and to have a heartfelt desire that they benefit and

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[1] The philosopher’s stone which according to Hindu legend immediately converts into gold any metal it touches.

their religious condition comes right – this is the prescribed way which has been the Sunnah of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. This method is far more beneficial and blessed than the well-known method of directing one's focus. There is permanence in the prescribed method while the effect of the well-known method remains only for that time and is then non-existent. This is similar to a person sitting near an oven. As long as he remains there, his body remains warm. The moment he moves away slightly and the cold wind gets him, his body becomes cold. As for the prescribed method of directing one's focus, its example is like that of a person who applies an ointment of arsenic which increases his innate body temperature. Even if such a person were to go onto the Shimlah Mountain, his body heat will remain the same."

Hadrat Wālā then said: "Do not have the doubt as to how a focus can be effective if it is not pre-intended. The fact of the matter is that Allāh *taʿālā* placed the element of conveyance in some hearts. For example, although the sun does not intend for its light to reach others, it still reaches them because Allāh *taʿālā* placed this quality in it that whatever comes in front of it is illuminated by it."

Glory to Allāh! This is an even greater excellence of Hadrat Wālā that his blessings reach others without intending it. It is a sign of his strong affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā*, his blessedness and his acceptance in Allāh's sight. The following couplet applies fully to Hadrat Wālā's denial of directing his focus on others and the seekers' perceiving the effects of his focus:

> O my beloved! I pray to Allāh that the evil eye does not afflict you. I take an oath by your head, I saw a certain expression of yours on a certain day which you yourself may have not seen.

First Companionship

After relating this unique explanation of Hadrat Wālā, I return once again to the story of my bayʿah. I was describing my first meeting with him. I introduced myself briefly after shaking hands with him. He got busy in preparing for the salāh, and after the zuhr salāh, he sat in his assembly and illuminated the audience with his words of wisdom. People came in droves upon droves and sat down after having the honour of seeing him and shaking hands with him. Eventually a large group of

people had assembled. In my extreme enthusiasm, I sat very close to Hadrat Wālā.

The Effect Of Hadrat Wālā's Companionship

Hadrat Wālā's blessed companionship and wise words had such a deep impact that no matter what he said, it would descend into my heart and embed itself in my mind. When he happened to look at me, a type of lightning would flash in my heart. Subsequently I became so used to him that I began spending most of my time in his service. I used to even spend most of my nights there, and sleep on the musjid or madrasah straw mats without any bedding or pillow. In short, I became intensely attached to Hadrat Wālā. He spent only two or three days in Allāhābād because he had to journey further and then spend two or three days again on his return trip. However, I was so much affected by remaining with him for these two or three days that it was as if every action of his had seeped into me to the extent if I were to speak to anyone after his departure or quote any of his statements – many of which I had memorized automatically – to my friends, I would unwittingly develop some similarity to his manner and tone of speech. In fact, I even perceived a similarity to his manner of walking and other physical actions. This clearly shows the strong and swift effect of Hadrat Wālā's influence. Moreover, on observing how beloved he was in the sight of people and the general effect which he had on everyone, I would spontaneously picture the Chief of the Messengers, the Beloved of Allāh, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. On observing his intellectual erudition and powerful manner of providing proofs, I perceived a strong force in Islam as opposed to the Englishmen, atheists and people of other faiths. This strengthened my heart and I thought to myself that – through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – no one has the audacity to point a figure at the truthfulness of Islam in the presence of Hadrat Wālā. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* this is an absolute fact.

Hadrat Wālā's Affection

All these early impressions are still firmly embedded in my heart and mind and have been related without really missing out anything. My latter conditions are details of this brief description. During this time I took the bold step of requesting him to pray for me. He responded immediately by saying: "May

Allāh *taʿālā* make you His lover and beloved." It was also during the same time or at a later stage when he said the following words with genuine affection and kindness: "I am speaking the truth when I say that my heart has a special bond with you."

I requested to him on one occasion: "Hadrat, pray that my heart does not even have any inclination towards sin." He replied: "What is the benefit of becoming a wall?" He then pointed to a wall and said: "Look at this wall: It does not steal, it does not commit adultery, it is very pious. Despite this, the poor thing is still a wall and nothing else. It does not receive any reward whatsoever. The excellence of man lies in experiencing an inclination to sin, but he restrains himself and does not allow himself to commit a sin."

The Obstacle To Bay'ah Is Removed

I then said to Hadrat Wālā: "Hadrat, I really want to pledge bayʿah but I cannot sum up the courage because if I continue sinning after having pledged allegiance to you, there will be no benefit in such a pledge. I request Hadrat to first purify my impure hands so that I can place them in Hadrat's pure hands." I become overjoyed when I think about this because – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – my approach to the concept of bayʿah was in accordance with Hadrat Wālā's from the very beginning. Hadrat Wālā was standing at the time and performing ablution. A water can was placed on the ridge of a wall.

Hadrat Wālā related an example to the statement which I made above. He said: There was an impure and dirty man who went to a river. The river said to him: "Come to me, come to me." He replied: "How can I come to you when you are so pure and clean, while I am absolutely impure and dirty?" The river replied: "If you cannot come to me in such a condition, you will never be able to purify and cleanse yourself without coming into me and washing yourself. In such a case you will remain away from me forever. O brother! This is the procedure for purifying yourself. Just close your eyes and dive into me without delving too much into the matter. Once you dive in, a wave from within me will rise up immediately, pass over your head, wash away all your impurities there and then, and make you pure and clean from head to toe."

A Spiritual Practice For Allāh's Love

Later, when I requested Hadrat Wālā to pray that I get Allāh's love, he instructed me to repeat Allāh's name 3 000 times after the fajr salāh in a slightly audible voice, with a slight beating of the head while imagining to myself that my heart is joining me in this dhikr. He demonstrated the method of this dhikr by doing it a few times before me. Hadrat Wālā then proceeded on his journey from Allāhābād and most probably went to A'zam Garh. As per his promise, he returned to Allāhābād after some time and stayed over again for a few days.

A Dhikr As Taught By Hadrat Wālā

In the meantime, I continued with the dhikr which Hadrat Wālā taught me and I developed a lot of enthusiasm in carrying it out. On his return, I mentioned my enthusiasm to him and added: "Previously I did not even perceive that I had a heart by my side. But I have started perceiving it now." The type, amount and time of dhikr which Hadrat Wālā had prescribed to me on the first day proved to be so appropriate and suitable to a person like me who is always looking for comfort, who is weak in his courage and who is quite heedless that if I were to make the slightest change in it, it would result in a deficiency and agitation in me. Hadrat Wālā's prescriptions almost always prove to be most appropriate to a person's conditions. He himself used to say in support of this: "I prescribed only recitation of the Qur'ān for Dr. 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Lucknowī. He was overjoyed by this and said: 'You asked me to do something which is totally in accordance with my temperament. I am most attached to recitation of the Qur'ān.'"

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "I did not even know about his enthusiasm. However, the thought came to my heart that instead of instructing him to engage in dhikr, it would be more suitable for him to engage in recitation of the Qur'ān. In the same way, I prescribed excessive optional salāhs for a particular person and he too said the same thing to me."

Hadrat Wālā pays due consideration to the enthusiasm of the seekers when instructing them to carry out spiritual practices and different forms of dhikr. When a person is attached to a particular form of dhikr, it becomes easy for him to be regular and punctual with it. He also remains focussed and experiences more concentration both of which help him further

and are also the objectives. Before instructing a seeker to carry out certain forms of dhikr, he asks him about the present forms which he engages in. He then increases or decreases its amount and prescribes it to him. He explains the reason for doing this: “A person develops affinity with his old spiritual practices and his heart does not want to give them up. Furthermore, he is more enthusiastic about carrying them out. This is why I do not ask him to give them up unnecessarily. In addition to this, because there is continuity with his old spiritual practices, it develops special blessings for him.”

Blessings In Spiritual Practices

After practising on the prescribed practices of Hadrat Wālā, a person perceives so much of blessings which he never perceived before. This is a clear indication of Hadrat Wālā’s acceptance, blessings and power of conveying benefit to others. This is the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

The Request For Bay'ah Is Accepted

I was so drawn towards Hadrat Wālā that when he returned to Allāhābād, I requested him to accept my bayʿah. He said: “I am not refusing, but why are you cutting down your respect and dignity unnecessarily? The respect which I have in my heart for you will certainly be reduced after you pledge allegiance to me.” Anyway, before Hadrat Wālā could depart, he accepted the bayʿah of Munshī Haqdād Khān Sāhib, the host [where Hadrat Wālā was staying] and myself.

Permission To Take A Job

Hadrat Wālā most probably proceeded to Kānpūr from Allāhābād. I too reached there after some time. I saw Hadrat Wālā sitting in meditation in one corner of the Jāmiʿ Musjid of Tipkāpūr district. Those were the early days of my enthusiasm and fervour, so when I saw him sitting in meditation like this, I addressed myself or my friends and quoted this couplet:

> He is sitting with his gaze down and his neck lowered. This is the one who has stolen my heart.

I was in search of a job during those days, and there were a few posts for inspectors in a distillery. I had sent in an application for these posts. When I asked Hadrat Wālā about the

permissibility or non-permissibility of this job, he said: "First find out from what the drinks are made." When I enquired, I learnt that they were made from molasses, *mahwā*[1] and other sources. It is not made from grapes or dates. Hadrat Wālā said: "The short answer to your question is that you must try to get this job. And if you want to know why I said this, you must write your question and send it to me by post to Thānah Bhawan. Allāh willing, I will provide you with detailed reasons." When Hadrat Wālā finds any leeway from the statements of any of the erudite jurists for the permissibility of any type of employment, he issues a ruling of permissibility based on the leeway given by the jurists and due to these times of general tribulation and weak inclination. This is because constricted livelihoods are far more detrimental and harmful.

In short, my application was accepted and I was sent to Shāh Jahānpūr for a fifteen-day training programme.

Hadrat Wālā's Encouragement

My father – may Allāh *taʿālā* give him the highest stages in Paradise – wrote to me and asked me to leave the job immediately. I then tried to get a job as a deputy collector. By Allāh's grace and the blessings of Hadrat Wālā's prayers, my application was successful. However, because I had become so attached to dhikr and other spiritual practices by virtue of Hadrat Wālā's benediction, I could not get myself to study the books for the examination and I had become disinclined from the world. I could not pass the examinations which I had to pass for confirmation of the job. I was given one more special chance. I wrote to Hadrat Wālā about my confusion and informed him that I had no hope of passing because my heart was not inclined at all to studying. Hadrat Wālā sent a very encouraging and heartening reply. He wrote: "Do not lose courage. Although you may be naturally disinclined, impose on your heart to concentrate and make sure you pass the examinations. Do not even allow any worry to come near you."

> It is most unfortunate when even an intelligent person's heart becomes worried and restless.

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[1] A tree bearing sweet flowers from which spirituous liquor is distilled.

Hadrat Wālā continues: "You must most certainly pass the examinations so that you are not humiliated before worldly people. You must give up this dead world after having acquired it. You must become one who abandons this world, not one who is abandoned by it. If you do not pass the examinations and are removed from your post, you will not be leaving the job of deputy collector, rather it will be casting you aside. Whereas you ought to be doing the opposite."

Preparation For The Examinations

After receiving these encouraging words from Hadrat Wālā, I took special leave to prepare for the examinations. I then went to a relative who was a deputy collector and lived near a mountain, sought his help and began my preparations. Even then, I could not prepare myself sufficiently. However, I had to fulfil Hadrat Wālā's wishes. From that very year, the authorities began permitting open-book testing. All praise is due to Allāh, this made the task easier. Despite this, it was of no use to consult the text books on certain topics, and I feared that I might fail.

I recall very well that after completing the exams in Lucknow and proceeding to Thānah Bhawan, I related to Hadrat Wālā that in the course of my preparations and even while writing my examinations, I was so concerned and worried that I could not enjoy in the least the beautiful sceneries of the mountain area and of the beautiful city of Lucknow. Only after I completed the examinations was I able to look at the earth and skies, and then I realized that I was living in this world. On hearing this, Hadrat Wālā first responded with an "Ah" which was filled with emotion. He added: "In the same way, the person who is worried about the examination of the Hereafter does not see this earth and the skies."

I was quite convinced at the time that Hadrat Wālā was relating his own condition.

Hadrat Wālā's Glad-tidings

After a certain salāh, Hadrat Wālā lied down in the musjid it itself in order to straighten his back while I began pressing his legs. When he just fell asleep, I got up to do some work. He called for me immediately and said: "I just saw a dream now. Although there is a possibility of disgrace by saying it before

hand, but what can I do and of what worth is my dream! I am therefore relating it to you. It was a very detailed and long dream and I do not remember it in its entirety. I only remember the gist of it. Someone came and informed me that you passed the examinations for the post of deputy collector. Although there was no hope of your passing in one particular subject, but you got good marks in it as well." By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I passed all the subjects and, through the wishes and prayers of Hadrat Wālā, I was appointed as a deputy collector.

My Own Dream

I too saw a dream during the same period. A baby snake passed by me and I killed it with some object. It died with just one strike. I then saw another poisonous creature which I cannot remember what it was at present. It came towards me and I killed it with two strikes. I was then shown a scorpion. When I struck it, it became lame and climbed the wall in that lame state. It seemed as if it fell on my duvet and I feared that it would bite me. I got up with a fright. I think it referred to the same subject which Hadrat Wālā had seen in his dream and regarding which he said that there was no hope of passing one subject but I got good marks in it as well.

Success In My Employment

After relating his dream to me, Hadrat Wālā said: "I also want you to pass. Once you pass, you will have the choice of continuing in that field or giving it up." I asked him on countless occasions to permit me to give up my job but he never advised me against it. He would quote this couplet most of the time:

> Now that he has appointed you, you must remain bound to it. Once he opens and frees you, you can become energetic and fully aware.

He eventually advised me to change the court in which I was working. This will be mentioned in the next few lines. I think it was also during this period that Hadrat Wālā replied to one of my letters by saying: "Allāh willing, you will acquire success in both worlds. My heart testifies to this."

Changing My Employment

By virtue of Hadrat Wālā's prayers and wishes, I remained in this job for seven years and then resigned from it after obtaining his permission. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, instead of being discarded by the world, I witnessed an example of discarding the world. The background to my leaving this job was that I had to make many decisions which were against the Sharīʿah. I used to experience a lot of constriction in this regard. Although I constantly asked Hadrat Wālā the rules and regulations in order to save myself from passing decisions against the pure Sharīʿah, I could not save myself completely. The following couplet applies:

> You tied me to a plank and let me loose on the river.
> You are now telling me to be careful I do not get wet.

I repeatedly expressed my doubts to Hadrat Wālā about working as a deputy collector and complained to him about it. He eventually advised me to try to get a job in the education department. I personally spoke to several seniors in this regard and wrote a formal letter expressing my desire to work in the education department. I also added that I was prepared to accept a pay which was less than what I was receiving at present. However, I was not successful in this regard and received a clear reply that there is no available post for me in the education department. I lost all hope and, after serving as a deputy collector in Fatahpūr, I took leave to go to Makkah and Madīnah. On my return, I was appointed to work in Kānpūr. Incidentally, Hadrat Wālā was on a journey and had stopped over in Kānpūr. When I related to him my despair as regards getting a job in the education department, he said with full force and confidence: "Do not lose hope. Continue trying. My heart is inclined to think that – Allāh willing – a better situation will develop in your favour." I renewed my efforts and expressly stated to my seniors that I was prepared to accept a very low wage.

Through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā's prayers, the testimony of his heart and my reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* an entirely new situation presented itself. The government approved plans for special Urdu schools to be opened for Muslims and for the appointment of a Muslim deputy inspector for each commissionary. I received a formal notice informing me about the availability of this post, a monthly salary of 150 rupees,

and if I was prepared to accept the job or not. Although this was the highest pay for this post, it was only half of what I was receiving as a deputy collector. When I wrote to Hadrat Wālā and expressed my hesitation because of the low salary, he replied: "It is not my habit to advise on these issues, but if I was in your place, I would certainly accept it even if the salary was less than that [150 rupees]. I would not allow this opportunity to pass." Hadrat Wālā added: "If you are still hesitant, you must not complain to me about the evils of your current job."

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the little hesitation which I had was removed through Hadrat Wālā's statement and I accepted the post very eagerly and enthusiastically. My services were now directed to the education department. Allāh *taʿālā* was most kind to me in the sense that I was gradually promoted to higher posts and my salary also increased over time. All praise is due to Allāh, it continues to this day. I had got the post of deputy collector soon after pledging bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā. I clearly recall asking him to pray that I get the job so that – Allāh willing – I will be able to occupy myself in dhikr and spiritual practices without any worry. I did not know that the job for which I had repeatedly asked Hadrat Wālā to pray for me would eventually lead me to repeatedly ask him to pray that I am able to leave it.

Practising On Dīn

After having the honour of pledging bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā, through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and Hadrat Wālā's prayers and focus, I developed an intense awareness to practising on Dīn. I clearly remember that when I had to go to Lucknow on one occasion and I passed through the market, I ensured that my gaze was fully lowered and constantly pinched my side so that my gaze does not fall on the women there and I do not turn my attention to their singing which was heard from all sides. Similarly, I was travelling on a horse-carriage in Allāhābād when I happened to come upon the noise and clamour of Muharram celebrations on the way. I turned my attention away from the music and concentrated on the awful sound made by the horse-carriage. I addressed my self saying: "The awful sound of these wheels is far better than the pleasant sound of the drums because listening to the latter is sinful while listening to the former is not."

In the course of my rounds as a deputy collector, I had emphasised on all my family members never to purchase anything which was cheaper than the market rate. When I found it difficult to be cautious about timber – because it generally does not have a price in the rural areas – I asked Hadrat Wālā about what I should do in this regard. He wrote back: "Incidentally I have a person who is knowledgeable on these issues sitting right here with me. He says that it can be obtained at a price from a carpenter." In the course of my rounds, there were several Muslims who, despite their old age, had never performed salāh throughout their lives. In fact, they had not even learnt how to perform it. They soon became regular and punctual in performing salāh. There were many others who used to shave or trim their beards but began keeping a full beard. In order to encourage them further, I used to say to them: "You broke your habit and started keeping a beard after I told you. If you say, I will break my habit and shave off my head." But they would not ask me to do that. I used to emphatically prohibit them from accepting bribes.

A Manager Repents

I recall one of my managers in Kānpūr who was about to be pensioned. He used to accompany me to the court musjid for the zuhr salāh. I said to him on one occasion: "Khān Sāhib! You are to be pensioned very soon and obviously you will no longer be able to accept any bribes. After you are pensioned, you will probably repent for accepting bribes. But at that time, your repentance will be under compulsion and just verbal; it will not be practical. How much time is there before you are pensioned? It is just a few months. If you give up accepting bribes now and repent completely, you would have also achieved practical repentance."

He was so affected by what I said that he repented there and then in the musjid, gave up accepting bribes completely and became a truly repentant person. All the people in the court were astonished. In fact, some people assumed that he is refusing to accept bribes because he is being offered too little. So they offered him large sums but he refused. He pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā later on and lived a religious life until his very end. May Allāh *taʿālā* forgive him.

Humility

Through Hadrat Wālā's blessings, I had developed so much humility within me that despite holding such a high position in the court, I did not consider it below my dignity to eat with my peon. But Hadrat Wālā had stopped me from doing this for my own good. This shows how Hadrat Wālā gave due consideration to upholding limits. I also remember how a very poor man wearing dirty clothes stood next to me in the musjid for the congregational salāh. I thoroughly enjoyed myself while thinking to myself that poor people have a very high rank in Allāh's sight and that external wealth and honour are of no significance.

A Distinguishing Feature Of Hadrat Wālā's Associates

In short, I was thoroughly blessed after pledging bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā and, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā,* I developed a special attachment to Dīn and became very conscious about what is lawful and what is not in whatever I did. This blessing of Hadrat Wālā is so glaring that it can be observed in almost all his associates and disciples. In fact, they are recognized by this special quality of strict observance to piety and Allāh-consciousness.

The Story Of A Builder

When a completely illiterate builder of Fatahpūr pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā, he became concerned about the speed with which work was done under contract and the one which was done under an owner's supervision. A person who had not even pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā said to me during my stay in Fatahpūr – which was over 25 years ago – with regard to this builder: "We certainly witnessed the effects of Hadrat Maulānā. Anyone who became connected to him would attach full importance to practising on the Sharīʿah. He would worry about what was lawful and what was not in whatever he did."

A Statement Of Amīr Shāh Khān

I had the occasion of staying over in Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband with Janāb Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, the ex-deputy principal. Janāb Amīr Shāh Khān Sāhib was also staying over. He was a very old personality who had met many senior personalities and remained in their company. I asked

him whether the lantern which we were using belonged to the Madrasah or not. He asked me: "Are you a murīd of Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib?" I replied: "Yes." He said: "I observed this quality of concern about such matters mostly in the murīds of the Maulānā. This is why I gauged that you must be his murīd."

The Story Of A Student

There was a person whose name and other details Hadrat Wālā cannot remember but whom he considered to be reliable at the time because a senior and well-known scholar-teacher had also related a similar incident. The Maulānā saw a foreign student in the musjid of his madrasah studying under the musjid lamp. When it was the time to put off the musjid lamps, he put off the lamp immediately, lit his own lamp and continued studying. Where do we find people who are so particular about such matters? And that too, students who consider the musjid oil to be their personal property! When the Maulānā saw this, he said to those who were around him: "This student seems to be an associate of Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī." After making inquiries, he learnt that the student was in fact a disciple of Hadrat Wālā.

The Real Miracle Of A Shaykh

I [the author] say: Creating a consciousness of Dīn in students and a concern for what is lawful and what is not is the real miracle of a shaykh, a clear indication of his blessedness and holiness, and his fundamental duty. There are thousands of examples wherein anyone who reverted to Hadrat Wālā for rectification, gradually imbibed his colour – which can be referred to as *sibghatullāh* (the colour of Allāh) – and the person's entire life changed. I personally saw such people who were absolutely "dry" in the beginning but within a few visits, their hearts developed such pain and heat that sobbing at every breath became their mark and their entire colour changed. Since Hadrat Wālā is himself a bearer of pain, heat and the Chishtī affiliation, genuine seekers are immediately affected by him and the following couplet applies without any exaggeration:

> I take an oath by Allāh that anyone who became a murīd of Sayyid Gaysū Darāz *rahimahullāh* became caught up in intense love [for Allāh *taʿālā*].

A Special Quality Of Associating With Hadrat Wālā

Hadrat Wālā himself says: "The Chishtīyyah spiritual family is an electric wire. As long as you do not touch it, it will not envelope you." I just remembered a statement of Hadrat Wālā with regard developing concern for Dīn and consciousness of what is lawful and what is not by virtue of associating with him. He made this statement after relating the condition of a certain shaykh who used to instruct his murīds to engage in vigorous dhikr for two hours at a time but never prohibited them from their un-Islamic dressing, appearance and other evil actions. Hadrat Wālā said: "What is so difficult about engaging in dhikr for two hours? A person works hard for a short while and is then free to do whatever he wants the entire day and night. Only that person must come to me who wants to place a saw over his self by night and day, and is concerned about what action is lawful and what is not at every step of his life."

Teaching The Reality

The purpose behind Hadrat Wālā's entire system of scolding, reprimanding and enquiring is to create this same concern and worry in his associates and disciples. This is the source of all good deeds and praiseworthy conditions. He refers to it as diligence, perseverance and attention; and considers it most essential in the path. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* this quality is a salient feature in most of his associates. Moreover, no one can gain admission in Hadrat Wālā's spiritual chain without first acquiring sound judgement and an understanding of the reality of the path. After observing these collective conditions, I had this belief that almost every associate of Hadrat Wālā has the qualification to be a leader himself, and people hold on to his actions. Just recently I heard a verification of this from Hadrat Wālā himself and was overjoyed by it.

A learned shaykh labelled the imaginary thoughts of a student which had certainly stemmed from a corrupt imagination as genuine and true inspirations. Instead of removing the poor ignorant student from this ignorance, he gave him more confidence and caused him to fall into compounded ignorance. I said to Hadrat Wālā: "By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā's lowest associate can understand such matters and will never make a mistake as made by this shaykh." Hadrat Wālā

replied: "It is certainly Allāh's favour that no one over here is ignorant about the reality of the path. This is because of my strictness and honesty or else confusion would have reigned over here as well. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I am satisfied with all who are here and I consider almost each one to be eligible to be given permission [to induct murīds or to be appointed as a khalīfah]. I would have given permission to all of them but religious propriety demands that the person given permission must have some external respectability, whether it is religious or worldly. For example, he must be a learned person or belong to a respectable family so that no one has any reservations about reverting to him and the path is not brought into disrepute."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how every matter was fully weighed and ascertained by Hadrat Wālā, how each point was based on absolutely correct principles, and perfected from every angle! This ought to be the mark of a Mujaddid and a Hakīm al-Ummah.

Hadrat Wālā said on one occasion: "All praise is due to Allāh I have such associates who have fully understood the principles of rectification and can carry out spiritual tutoring better than many famous spiritual masters. However, the problem nowadays is that people align themselves to a person because of the latter's popularity. No one looks at his expertise. There is a lot of ignorance about the path." Hadrat Wālā heard about the strict adherence to piety of one of his khulafā', Janāb Hājī Shamshād Sāhib. He spontaneously quoted the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* in a very pleased tone:

> The beloved brought up in our home is not inferior to anyone.

It is most appropriate and seemed as if it was composed for this very occasion.

My Love For Hadrat Wālā

In short, through the blessings of pledging bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā, I developed a lot of concern about what is lawful and what is not. Some incidents in this regard were quoted above. My love for him had reached such a level that if a person who is ignorant about love were to hear of it, he will refer to it as madness. And a person who has no affinity with it will make jokes of it. The following couplet applies:

Although we may be maligned by the intelligent ones, we do not desire popularity and fame.

The conversations of lovers in matters related to Allāh *taʿālā* are due to a fervour of love and not out of disrespect.

An Astonishing Expression Of Love

In my fervour of love, I said to Hadrat Wālā in a very hesitating, ashamed and subdued tone: "Hadrat! A very obscene thought comes repeatedly into my heart. I am also very ashamed to express it and cannot find the courage." Hadrat Wālā was getting up and proceeding to the musjid at the time. He said to me: "Let it out, let it out." I lowered myself out of shame and said: "This thought comes repeatedly into my heart that I should have been a woman who was married to you." Hadrat Wālā was most pleased by this expression of love, laughed unwittingly and said as he was entering the musjid: "This is certainly your love for which you will be rewarded. Allāh willing, you will be rewarded for it."

Hadrat Wālā has not forgotten this incident to this day. He takes delight in relating it in his assembly and says jokingly: "At least he did not hope for the opposite."

Speaking About Hadrat Wālā All The Time

I was so enamoured by Hadrat Wālā during those days that my heart desired that I should have his books in my hand, and go around like a mad man speaking about him to everyone – those who were eligible and those who were not. In fact, even to the doors, walls, trees, rocks, unbelievers, animals; and to read his books to them. I remember very clearly how on one occasion of ʿĪd al-Ad-hā my sacrificial goat was tied in an empty section of my house. When I went there, I was overtaken by a desire to sit down and speak about Hadrat Wālā to it.

Addressing Monkeys

I was engaged in the dhikr of Allāh *taʿālā* on one occasion when I suddenly experienced a forceful pull towards Hadrat Wālā. It seemed like the force of lightning. I pictured him with great intensity and love for him embedded itself forcefully in the depths of my heart. The room in which I was engaged in dhikr was in the upper storey and the windows were closed. There

was a roof on the opposite side. I heard a sound on the roof so I opened a window and saw monkeys jumping around. They fled the moment I opened the window. Since I was in an overwhelmed state of fervent love for Hadrat Wālā at the time, I unwittingly addressed the monkeys and said: "Hey, where are you fleeing to? At least listen to the dhikr of Hadrat, and then you can go."

Faith In Hadrat Wālā's Relatives

I used to be very respectful towards Hadrat Wālā's worldly-minded relatives as well. I kissed the hands of his younger brother, Munshī Akbar ʿAlī Sāhib, although his dressing and appearance at the time were unbecoming. He was quite ashamed by my action. As far as I remember, I sought permission from Hadrat Wālā to give vent to my natural feeling in this manner. Hadrat Wālā was very particular about taking into consideration the feelings of others, so he said to me: "He will be embarrassed. It will be better for you to seek his permission first." I did as I was advised. Since he was of an informal disposition, he permitted me to kiss his hand after seeing my eagerness. He said: "It will cause me no harm."

His young son, Muhammad ʿAlī, was sitting and eating grapes with me. Because this young boy was Hadrat Wālā's nephew, I began sucking on his left over grape peels. The child stopped me from doing this in his own infant language.

Correspondence With Hadrat Wālā

The letters which I wrote to Hadrat Wālā during that period were filled with love and adoration. Hadrat Wālā's replies too were very flowery and loving. I remember not addressing him with the normal titles of respect and etiquette in one of those letters. Instead, I addressed him with the following couplet:

> O my life! O my beloved! O my king! O you who alone
> are my Islam and my īmān!

This couplet is from the *Mathnawī Zer-wa-Bum* which was written by Hadrat Wālā during his student days.

My letters of those days used to be very lengthy. I apologized to Hadrat Wālā for this in one of my letters. Glory to Allāh! Look at the loving and affectionate manner in which he replied: "Have you ever seen any disapproval over the long hair-locks of

the beloved!” Some of my letters contained nothing but poems of the spiritual masters and true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. Despite this, Hadrat Wālā used to ascertain my condition from the poems themselves. When replying to such letters, he would reply with poems which were appropriate to my condition. This consoled me totally.

A Reply To An Ode

One of my letters was filled with amatory poems which I had composed while in a state of intense enthusiasm and eagerness. Although I was very particular about adhering to the spiritual practices which Hadrat Wālā had prescribed for me, writing these poems interfered severely with my programme. I complained about this in my letter. His reply is quoted here from *Ahsan al-ʿAzīz*, volume 1, no. 338.

> I was overtaken by ecstasy when I received your ode which, based on your natural capabilities, is an eternal ode. May Allāh *taʿālā* fulfil all your objectives. As for the issue of wasting time, that is solved by obedience to divine decree to which man has to succumb. Your intention was to control your time but time got wasted. Allāh willing, the fact that this issue was realized by yourself, it will be a springboard for progress. Māshā Allāh, the prayer mat of ʿAlī Sajjād Sāhib is also taking on a colour. Distressed with love and passing on the agony of love. Ashraf ʿAlī

Allāh-Bestowed Insight

Some time after I pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā in Allāhābād, I learnt that he is to deliver a lecture in Itāwah. I went there enthusiastically. My nephew who was a very intelligent and well-known person was a deputy collector there. Hadrat Wālā was introduced to him very briefly but he immediately perceived my nephew’s intelligence and said to me: “He seems to be very intelligent.” I was astonished at how Hadrat Wālā identified this quality of his after such a short and informal meeting when it was only ascertained by others after a very long time of interaction. This quality of perception in Hadrat Wālā is from among his many natural qualities and capabilities and must have manifested itself thousands of times in the course of training and tutoring the seekers. This Allāh-

bestowed insight is proof of Hadrat Wālā's perfect intelligence which he inherited from his forefather, Hadrat ʿUmar Fārūq *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He is the external cause for Hadrat Wālā being a specialist physician of the Muslim community, a lighthouse of instruction and an imām of Sufism of the highest level. The real and essential cause is obviously Allāh *taʿālā*.

> Capability is not a prerequisite for His bestowal. Rather, His bestowal is a prerequisite for capability.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ، وَمَنْ يُّؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوْتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيْرًا، وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ اِلَّا أُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ

He confers wisdom to whomever He wills. Whoever is given wisdom has been given immense good. It is only the intelligent who take admonition.[1]

Hadrat Wālā's Appealing Personality

It has been observed on countless occasions by numerous people that anyone who looks at Hadrat Wālā without any preconceived notions immediately develops faith and confidence in him from within his heart. He is automatically drawn towards him. This is an indication that he is beloved in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. Hadrat Wālā himself said on one occasion: "When I turn to a person and speak to him, he becomes completely subdued to me as if his heart has come into my hand."

My nephew whom I just mentioned above was very impressed by Hadrat Wālā merely by meeting him, speaking with him and observing the humble manner in which he performed salāh. He explained to me the reason for his impression: "I knew he was a powerful scholar from beforehand, this is why I was impressed in this way."

How To Become Regular With Salāh

I had another relative in Itāwah who was a free thinker and looked like an Englishman from head to toe. He too was so impressed by Hadrat Wālā that he asked me to obtain an amulet for him so that he becomes regular with salāh. When I made this request to Hadrat Wālā, he said: "I do not know of any such amulet whereby I could place a policeman together with his stick inside the amulet, who would then come out of it

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 269.

at the time of salāh and ensures he performs his salāh. Yes, I can teach him a method through which he can become a regular performer of salāh within a few days. But this procedure is not to be merely asked about; it has to be practised. The procedure is this: If he misses one salāh, he must skip one meal. If he misses two salāhs, he must skip two meals. If he misses three salāhs, he must skip three meals. Once he experiences this hunger a few times, his self will be rectified and he will perform his salāh regularly and punctually. As I said, this procedure has to be practised. If a person takes the courage to practise it and remains firm in his resolution, it is impossible for him not to become a true performer of salāh."

The effects of my first meeting with Hadrat Wālā in Allāhābād were refreshed by this second meeting in Itāwah and my desire to imbibe from him increased in intensity. Hadrat Wālā's affection too increased to such an extent that when he was about to return to his hometown, he – despite his natural and well-known independence – asked me if I would like to come to Thānah Bhawan. He asked me this after seeing my enthusiasm. However, I had only made preparations for the journey to Itāwah so I could not accompany him to Thānah Bhawan.

Adoration

Soon thereafter, Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband held its graduation ceremony which was attended by Hadrat Wālā. I was also present. There were thousands of people, and the largest number of people gathered around Hadrat Wālā. This quality of being adored by people is one of the most distinguished qualities of Hadrat Wālā and needs no elucidation. Although Hadrat Wālā was very strict in reprimanding people over their uncivil actions, the adoration which Allāh *ta'ālā* had placed in him removed all these external causes of dislike and alienation. On one occasion he became fed up with people crowding to shake hands with him on a busy street and said to them: "If you are not going to listen, I will have to start beating you." But the people did not bother, fell upon him from all sides, and a throng of them followed him wherever he went.

Hadrat Wālā had just recently recovered from a severe illness. He was still weak and could therefore not bear the disorderly crowds of people. Because of his illness, he was not even

expected to attend the graduation ceremony. However, he saw a dream in which he was addressing the gathering and explaining this Hadīth to the people: "Love for this world is the root of all evil." On seeing this dream, he had hopes of recovery and the ability to attend. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he recovered unexpectedly at the exact time of the ceremony and delivered a lecture despite his weakness. He spoke on the above-quoted Hadīth. Details in this regard were provided under the chapter, Sound Admonition.

Eminence

I witnessed Hadrat Wālā's eminence and majesty for the first time during this ceremony. Prior to this, I had only witnessed his quality of beauty. In ordinary situations, I always found him to be an embodiment of kindness, mercy and dignity; and I still find him to be a personification of beauty. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for this. However, if the person whom Allāh *taʿālā* sent into this world as a reformer does not have the necessary quality of majesty as well, he will not be able to carry out his responsibility as he ought to. Hadrat Shaykh Akbar Muhīyy ad-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī *rahimahullāh* writes in *al-Amr al-Muhkam al-Marbūt fī mā Yalzamu Ahl Tarīqillāh min ash-Shurūt*:

فلا بد أن يكون عند الشيخ دين الأنبياء، وتدبير الأطباء، وسياسة الملوك. وحينئذ يقال له الأستاذ.

A shaykh must possess the religiosity of the Prophets, the deliberation of physicians and the administrative acumen of kings. Only then can he be referred to as a true master.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, He conferred these three qualities to the full to Hadrat Wālā. All praise is due solely to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills. In short, a reformer has to have the quality of majesty. However, this quality only displays itself when there is a need for it. And the need only arises when a condition of a seeker has to be corrected and rectified. Since it is necessary for the rectification of seekers, it is no less than the quality of beauty. In fact, it is more important in certain situations when bearing in mind the results which it brings about.

There are countless examples of Hadrat Wālā's majestic influence and the excellent results which it brought. He

removed the pride of thousands of arrogant fellows and set right their attitudes. In so doing, he honoured them with self-obliteration and submission – qualities which are the essentials of Sufism. A single scolding uprooted chronic spiritual ailments for the rest of a person's life. Many heedless souls were awakened through constant reprimanding which made them vigilant with regard to the tricks and deceptions of the self for the rest of their lives. Genuine concern for Dīn was instilled in the hearts of many indifferent souls. There are thousands of examples of this nature which are witnessed by night and day. I cannot relate them all. Just a few are mentioned here.

A Treatment For Blasphemous Whisperings

A person was troubled by blasphemous thoughts and whisperings for quite some time and complained to Hadrat Wālā several times. On one occasion he met Hadrat Wālā in privacy and said: "My heart now feels that I must become a Christian." On hearing this, Hadrat Wālā slapped him immediately, pushed him aside and said: "Get out you wretched fellow. You want to become a Christian? Who is stopping you? Go and become a Christian right now. Go and disgrace yourself. Islam certainly does not need an ungrateful and wretched fellow like you. In fact it will be better if you go, Islam will be purified of unworthy people as yourself. How will it harm anyone if you become a Christian? You will go to Hell."

No sooner Hadrat Wālā slapped him, all his whisperings disappeared. They were repulsed in such a manner that at least fifteen years have passed since the incident and the man did not even dream of such whisperings. That one slap was like a laxative which removed all the filth from inside.

A Man Is Treated For Love

A man who was regular with salāh and fasting lived in a town near Thānah Bhawan. He fell in love with a Brahman widow. He used to go intentionally to her under the pretext of purchasing milk from her. In the process, he would cast lustful glances at her. He related his secret to a friend and said: "I am entrapped in this calamity. How can I escape it?" His friend advised him to go to Thānah Bhawan and to relate his condition to Hadrat Wālā. He presented himself, described his condition on a piece of paper and handed it personally to Hadrat Wālā. He added in his note: "I have fallen so much in

love with her that if she were to give me her urine to drink, I will drink it without any hesitation.”

As was his habit, Hadrat Wālā first adopted a soft approach by advising him to keep away from her and to completely give up going to her. The man said: “But I go intentionally and wittingly to her.” Hadrat Wālā became angry, slapped him and scolded him thus: “You wretched fellow, when you are not abstaining intentionally, why are you coming to me for a treatment? Go into the fire. What treatment can I give you when you are striking your own self?”

The slap proved to be an elixir for the man. He became extremely remorseful, it hurt his self severely, all his mischief disappeared and he became straight once again. He developed a dislike for the woman and stopped frequenting her. He came to his senses with the single slap and the devil left his mind. Hadrat Wālā relates: “Later on I regretted my action for having slapped a stranger. But what could I do, my religious fervour compelled me to raise my hand. But it proved beneficial to him.”

A Youngster Is Treated Over His Love For A Prostitute

Hadrat Wālā relates another similar incident together with the above incident. Instead of being strict, he was most soft to the person, and the softness proved to be beneficial. He says: A youngster was brought to me by his father, uncle and a few other family members. They complained thus: “He is having a relationship with a prostitute and is wasting away all our wealth for it. Please explain to him.” Instead of advising him in the presence of his family, I held him by his hand and took him into the musjid. I seated him in privacy and spoke to him as though I was his well-wisher and confidant. I said to him: “What do these people know about your heart is feeling! But you must clearly tell me what has compelled you into doing something which is causing you not to be bothered about your honour and the destruction of your wealth?”

I was still talking to him in this vein when his father, uncle and others entered the musjid to listen to what I was saying to him. I scolded them saying: “What is this rudeness for? Go and do whatever you have to. This matter is between him and myself. Why do you have to interfere in our matter?” They got up and left. This increased the youngster’s confidence in me and he

became fully at ease with me. He considered me to be his genuine well-wisher. When his family members left after I scolded them, I posed the same question to him again: "Why are you so much in love with her? Tell me clearly."

He replied: "The fact is that initially I really loved her. But now my relationship with her is superficial because on one occasion she had made me make a promise to her at the grave of Hadrat Makhdūm Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in Pīrān Kalyar Sharīf that I will always maintain a relationship with her and never leave her. One of the attendants at the grave saw us and approached us. He took a special and solemn oath from both of us that we will never turn away from each other. I now fear that if I were to cut off my relationship with her, a calamity from above will strike me. After all, I had taken an oath at the grave of a pious man that I will maintain my relationship with her."

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said to those who were present: "People are very strange. They have no shame in committing such shameless acts at the graves of pious personalities and making them witnesses to such unlawful promises. The attendants at the graves are more worse for encouraging such sins at the graves. I seek forgiveness from Allāh *taʿālā*. There is no power and might except with Allāh *taʿālā*. I will not be surprised if he [the attendant at the grave] received some monetary return in exchange for their advice. In fact, he must have certainly received something because that is his occupation."

Hadrat Wālā continues: "After listening to the youngster, I said to him: 'Very well, tell me, do you consider me to be your confidant and well-wisher?' He replied: 'Certainly.' I asked: 'Do you consider me to be an honest person?' He replied in the affirmative and said: 'If you are not an honest person who else can there be who can be considered to be honest!?' I said: 'I take an oath that if you do not break this promise, a calamity will certainly afflict you. If you break it, you will never experience a calamity because of breaking it. It is obligatory to break a promise of this nature. However, since your promise entails an oath, you will have to pay an atonement for breaking it. But this is nothing serious, it can be easily paid.'"

"The youngster said: 'My only fear was that some calamity will befall me, and I maintained this relationship solely because of this fear. I no longer have any love for her. Now that you are

assuring me that no calamity will afflict me if I were to give her up, I will certainly give her up. However, permit me to go to her just once so that I can inform her that I no longer have anything to do with her. The reason why I am asking you to permit me is so that she does not have to wait expectantly for me. After all, it is undignified to keep someone waiting. I do not know for how long the poor woman will continue waiting for me.'"

Anyway, Hadrat Wālā permitted him but said: "Look, you must only inform her. Beware of doing anything else." The youngster promised and assured Hadrat Wālā. When the two spoke to the father, uncle and other relatives and they learnt that Hadrat Wālā gave him permission to go to her just once, they said: "This is nothing but his mischief. He will not give up frequenting her." Hadrat Wālā scolded them saying: "Keep quiet! What do you know. I have full confidence in him." Hadrat Wālā then turned to the boy and said: "Son, you must take whatever jewellery and other items which you gave to her." The youngster said: "Whatever I have given to her is gone. What is the need to take back what I gave? It seems very undignified to do that."

Hadrat Wālā did not insist on this. They all left. The boy's father came to Hadrat Wālā a few days later, gave him five rupees, and said: "Buy sweetmeats with this money and distribute it among those who are in the Madrasah. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, through your blessings, my son has cut off all ties with that woman. As he had promised to you, he went to her solely to inform her of the breaking up of their relationship. He hasn't gone back to her." After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "At the time, it came to my mind that a soft approach will be most appropriate for him. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, softness proved to be beneficial."

A Man Is Treated For Pride

Hadrat Wālā stopped over in Kīrānah in the course of one of his journeys. A man came to pledge bayʿah and also brought some sweetmeats which he hoped to distribute. However, instead of bringing the sweetmeats himself, he got another man to carry it for him. From this action of his and from his entire demeanour, Hadrat Wālā ascertained that he has pride and that he thinks highly of himself. Hadrat Wālā wanted to treat the pride and arrogance of the man. Instead of accepting his bayʿah at that

very place, Hadrat Wālā said to him: "I do not have the time here. I have to go to a certain person's place. Maybe I will get a chance to accept your bayʿah there. You may come there." The poor fellow had to accompany Hadrat Wālā together with the man who was carrying the tray of sweetmeats. Since he had brought the sweetmeats for the sake of distributing them after the bayʿah, he could not leave them behind. On reaching that place, Hadrat Wālā said: "What can I say? I do not even have the time here." They proceeded to a third place and Hadrat Wālā said the same thing again. In short, Hadrat Wālā caused him to go around with him for about two hours together with the tray of sweetmeats. And he made it a point of going through the market places so that the man's ego may be thoroughly trampled and his arrogance may leave his heart. When Hadrat Wālā troubled him properly and gauged that he has realized his illness, he accepted his bayʿah.

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā commented thus: "A serious ailment like pride which does not leave a person even after many years of spiritual striving left this man within two hours by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*." He added: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* my treatment here is done through such ploys. Allāh *taʿālā* enables me to think them up at the appropriate times. The elders of the past also resorted to such ploys."

Hadrat Wālā Rectifies His Nephew

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to Maulānā Saʿīd Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was the elder brother of Hadrat Wālā's blood nephew, Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib ʿUthmānī: "I loved him the most but I was the strictest towards him." The result of this treatment was that previously he wore very elegant clothes and was so proud that he used to say: 'If there is any job, I must receive a minimum monthly salary of 1 000 rupees.' But then he obliterated himself totally and completely, and began considering himself to be lower than tanners and toilet-cleaners. He also began wearing very simple clothes. When he passed away and his clothes were taken out for distribution, everyone was astonished and surprised at their simplicity. Hadrat Wālā himself said: "When I saw the condition of those clothes, I cried from within myself."

I [the author] personally saw the harsh and strict manner in which Hadrat Wālā treated him while at home and on journeys. I saw him scolding and reprimanding him severely in the

presence of many people. We were in Allāhābād, travelling by horse-cart. There was no place in the cart so I went to sit with the herd-driver. Hadrat Wālā sent the Maulānā [his nephew] from inside the cart, seated him with the herd-driver, and called me to sit next to him. He then said to me: "This seating arrangement is advantageous to both of you. The advantage to him is that it will develop humility in him. The advantage to you is that you do not become overly humble and do not become conceited into thinking that you are very humble."

I heard that the Maulānā had delivered an excellent lecture in a gathering in Sahāranpūr. The audience was very impressed and all who were present began beholding the Maulānā with respect and awe. After the lecture, Hadrat Wālā reprimanded and scolded him severely over some unimportant matter before all who were present. He did this so that he does not develop any self-conceit and arrogance. Later on, Hadrat Wālā explained this as the reason for his treatment. If Hadrat Wālā does not give any concessions to his own beloved family members in matters concerning rectification and reformation, how could others ever have the audacity to make such demands?! This is especially so when we bear in mind Hadrat Wālā's own statement on this subject: "Concession in this regard is a betrayal of trust."

Hadrat Wālā Refuses To Accept The Bay'ah Of Some Nawābs And Relatives

Hadrat Wālā says quite often: "If a person's heart has not opened up sufficiently, he should at least not pressurize me so much that I cannot say to him that he is useless. I should at least be able to say to him that his action is useless and inappropriate. If I cannot say even that, then it is not permissible to accept such a person as a murīd in the first place." This is why he excused himself from accepting the bay'ah of some Nawābs and influential people despite their persistence. Moreover, he generally abstained from accepting his relatives as murīds, except in special circumstances when their heart had opened up completely. Hadrat Wālā was a bit lenient in this regard in the beginning but when he experienced certain constrictions and inconveniences, he almost entirely gave up accepting his relatives as murīds. He says: "In most cases, it is pointless to accept relatives as murīds because they

have some pride in them [over their relationship], whereas this relationship is one of submission."

He continues: "When it comes to non-relatives, I reprimand and scold them without any reservations. In fact, if I find it necessary to expel them from here, I will do it. But if such a need arises with relatives, it becomes difficult to pluck the courage to do such a thing because of our relationship and because they themselves expect special treatment. I myself have a natural urge to accord them special treatment. If religious benefit is given preference over natural urges and a strict approach is adopted, the effects of ill-feeling will spread from one family member to the other. Thus, after experiencing such situations, I concluded that the safest thing to do is to excuse myself from the spiritual training of relatives. This is what I do in most cases."

The Need For Diplomacy In Rectification

As stated in the quotation from Hadrat Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh*, a shaykh must possess the diplomacy of kings. The nature of people in general is such that rectification cannot be realized without some strictness. The need for it is accepted by all of those who possess intelligence. Every civilized nation has laid down certain principles of diplomacy as per its individual needs. In fact, the system of the world is based on the principles of diplomacy. When diplomacy is essential for external peace, it ought to be more necessary for internal spiritual peace because rectification of external evil is not as difficult as rectification of internal evil. It is therefore most astonishing when diplomacy is not considered necessary for the removal of the evils of the self. If a reformer revives the method of rectification of the elders of the past and rectifies the seekers on natural principles, then every Tom, Dick and Harry is ready to raise objections. Whereas the objectors themselves resort to diplomacy when dealing with those who are under them, and there too they search for what is most prudent.

There is a well known idiom in Arabic which says that every person is forbearing only at the time of the anger of others. We will only accept the objections when the objector is never displeased by any error of his workers, he never reprimands his children for doing something unacceptable and no matter how much someone annoys him, he does not stop him, scold him or expresses any complaint. He just remains silent and

forbearing. If he himself does this, we can say he has some basis for objecting. If not, he ought to be ashamed of himself. If a person is so insensitive that he does not become angry when the situation demands him to become angry, then he must listen to the following fatwā of Hadrat Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh* as quoted in *Tabaqāt Kubrā* of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh*:

من استغضب فلم يغضب فهو حمار، ومن استرضى فلم يرض فهو شيطان.

If a person is angered (i.e. treated in a manner in which sound temperament demands on him to become angry) but does not become angry, then he is an ass. If a person's pleasure is sought (i.e. a person apologizes to him for his mistake and seeks his pleasure) and he does not become pleased, then he is a Satan (because it is a sign of severe pride. This is why he is a Satan).

Natural Leniency And Harshness

We just spoke about the general need for and wisdom behind diplomacy. As per Hadrat Wālā's statement, the temperaments of some specific spiritual masters are so overwhelmingly forbearing that they overpower prudence. When they are faced with something which ought to cause anger, they are not prompted to become angry even though they may be displeased. These natural differences in temperaments have been a continuous norm of Allāh *taʿālā* which encompasses thousands of conceptual and legal wisdoms which concern not only normal temperaments but also temperaments of the elite and the spiritual masters. The following Hadīth is a clear indication of this. It is quoted verbatim from volume four of Hadrat Wālā's *at-Tasharruf* together with his explanation and commentary.

في السماء ملكان، أحدهما يأمر بالشدة والآخر باللين، وكلاهما مصيب. أحدهما جبرئيل والآخر ميكائيل. ونبيان أحدهما يأمر باللين والآخر بالشدة، وكل مصيب، إبراهيم ونوح. ولي صاحبان أحدهما يأمر باللين والآخر بالشدة، أبو بكر وعمر (طب) وابن عساكر عن أم سلمة (ض) لكن قال العزيزي بإسناد صحيح. والله أعلم.

There are two angels in the heavens; one commands severity and the other leniency. (This command is really from Allāh taʿālā because they only carry out what they are ordered to do. They instruct their helpers to act severely or leniently because they

themselves are ordered – through revelation – to render services which entail severity or leniency depending on what wisdom demands. Alternatively, this could be an allusion to their natural severity and leniency which they pass on due to these qualities being found intrinsically in them, although they may not literally command it). Both of them are correct (because they are appropriate to the situations). One of them is Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām (who is by and large in charge of arranging the descent of punishment, etc.) and the other is Mīkā'īl ʿalayhis salām (who, in most cases, is in charge of arranging the descent of rains, etc.).

(Just as there are two angels for these two qualities) there are two Prophets (for these two qualities). One commands leniency and the other severity. (The above two possibilities exist here as well). Both are correct (because if they are doing it via divine revelation, then we know that it is obviously and undoubtedly correct. If they are doing it through their independent judgement, then as long as divine revelation does not stop them from it, it is incumbent to practise on independent judgement). The two Prophets are Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām and Nūh ʿalayhis salām (the first commands leniency and the second, severity). I have two Companions (possessing the same qualities), one commands leniency and the other, severity. They are Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu and ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu (whose leniency and severity are well-known).

Note: Hanafī said that the purpose of this Hadīth is to demonstrate that Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* – each one possesses a quality of each of the above mentioned Prophets and angels, and that both of them are correct because severity is needed where leniency is not suitable, and leniency is needed where severity is not appropriate.

I say that the meaning of the Hadīth is still not clear because the reason which is given for their correctness raises the question of why is there a difference in their qualities? After all, if a situation demands severity, every one ought to respond with severity. And if a situation demands leniency, every person ought to respond with leniency. I therefore feel that the explanation is that everyone agrees that leniency must be adopted if the situation demands it, and severity must be adopted if the situation demands it. But the difference comes in when in one and the same situation there is difference of

opinion due to differences in temperaments. Should leniency or severity be adopted in that one situation? For example, as it had happened with regard to the captives after the Battle of Badr. Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* differed with regard to them. The first was of the opinion that they must pay a ransom, while the second felt that they must be killed. Such differences are possible in situations which require independent judgements. The difference between Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* can certainly be of this nature.

As for the differences between the two Prophets or the two angels, if they also resort to independent judgements, then the above explanation can apply to them as well. But if it is not based on independent judgement, instead, every difference is caused by divine revelation, then the purpose of the simile will be differences in general and not specific differences. We will then explain it as follows: No objections should be made against these qualities which are found in Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* because it has been a continuous norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to created differing qualities in His close servants. The differences in temperaments between those who receive divine revelation [Prophets] is displayed through differences in divine revelation. Those who are non-Prophets, their differences are displayed through independent judgement. The question that was raised above is now answered. By establishing the differences in the temperaments of the Prophets, another issue becomes very clear, viz. the differences in the temperaments of the spiritual masters. Some immature people make objections to this. For example, they say: “What kind of Sufi is this? He did not act severely against this serious matter!” Or, “What kind of Sufi is this? He is acting so severely in regard to this light matter!”

The above Hadīth clearly exposes the error of these objectors. The essence is that each one’s intention is rectification. Differences in temperaments result in differences in opinions. One considers leniency to be the way of rectification, the other considers severity to be the way.

At this point, I recall a statement of Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Maungerī *rahimahullāh*, a khalīfah of Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. He used to say: “Some people make objections against the Maulānā’s harsh

temperament. They do not realize that Allāh *taʿālā* created His servants with different temperaments from the very beginning. Thereafter, He made some of these servants into His close and accepted servants. After they become His accepted servants, the natural temperament does not change. This is why some of these accepted servants are lenient while others are strict." The quotation from *at-Tasharruf* ends here.

We learn from the above Hadīth that severity is not disliked totally. Rather, unnecessary and unwise severity is disliked. In the latter case, it [severity] as per a statement of Hadrat Wālā, "is not severity but hard-heartedness." As for the severity which is for the sake of organization and rectification – as mentioned in this Hadīth – it is absolutely praiseworthy because, as per the statement of Hadrat Wālā, "it is not severity but sharpness; it is not force but direction; it is not harshness but soundness."

A Legacy Of The Fārūqī Lineage

Glory to Allāh! Look at the fine poetic manner in which Hadrat Wālā expresses the facts. It clearly displays his investigative acumen and literary skills. Since he is – by the order of Allāh *taʿālā* – of Fārūqī lineage, he is a true exponent of Hadrat 'Umar Fārūq *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* as regards praiseworthy severity. It is not confined to this single quality, rather, by the will of Allāh *taʿālā*, he possesses many Fārūqī qualities which are clearly visible in him. For example, far-sightedness, vigilance, attentiveness to consequences, sharp-sightedness, correctness of opinion, independence, justice, proclaiming the truth, desire for the truth, supervision of the self, fear of Allāh, servitude, steadfastness, diligence, consideration, kindness, decorum, love, generosity, bravery, mercy and so on. Allāh willing, some of these qualities will be detailed in a forthcoming chapter.

Praiseworthy Severity

The severity which is found in Hadrat Wālā is praiseworthy, it is certainly not blameworthy as considered by some immature people. It will only be blameworthy if – Allāh forbid – Hadrat Wālā places such burdens on the seekers in the course of rectifying them in which there is no advantage and benefit. Or he has laid down such principles which are harsh in themselves. The principles laid down by him are all extremely

reasonable, totally in line with the demands of sound disposition, and extremely easy to practise on. Yes, he adheres very strictly to those principles and makes others to adhere to them strictly. This is because they are all correct principles which have been established after lengthy periods of experiences. They contain countless religious and worldly benefits for both parties. In short, it is certainly excessive to label strict adherence to principles as severity because, as per a statement of Hadrat Wālā himself, "A law which is easy in itself but adherence to it is strictly enacted cannot be labelled severe."

He explains this with an example: "Look, all the essential postures of salāh are extremely easy to carry out, and in the case of valid excuses, even more ease and concessions are given. However, adherence to them is strictly imposed. In such a case, the injunction of the Sharī'ah will not be labelled severe. Rather, those who break or transgress the injunction will be castigated. We will say to such a person: 'O you worthless fellow! There is so much of ease and concession in salāh but you are still failing in it.' This is why there are harsh punishments in the Hereafter for the one who abandons salāh, and harsh punishments in this world as well. Some imāms have gone to the extent of saying that it is incumbent to kill a person who abandons salāh."

Difference Between Severity And Adherence

Hadrat Wālā adds: "If the principles are soft but adherence to them is done with severity, then it is not severity but firmness. Take the example of a rope made of silk. It is so soft that you can knot it. At the same time, it is so strong that if you were to tie an elephant with it, it will not be able to break the rope. The silk rope will not be labelled severe or hard, but strong. Yes, a steel chain will be said to be hard because steel is essentially hard. If the chain is tied to a person's legs, it will injure him. But this is not the case with a silk rope. Although it surpasses the chain in its ability to restrict a person, the legs are not injured by it; rather they experience much comfort from it. If a person confines himself to it without any struggle and does not waste his time in trying to come out of it, he will not experience any pain of struggle and resistance."

Adhering To Correct Principles

Hadrat Wālā continues: "If a person comes here and adheres to the correct principles, he will never experience any unpleasantness because of me. People cast themselves into calamity by breaking the correct principles and committing unprincipled actions. They themselves are responsible for the calamity – not I nor my principles. Anyone staying here and observing everything with an open mind will find the truth exposed to him. Most of those who make objections are those who hear stories, not those who have observed visually. When an incident is observed, its entire sequence is before the person. The truth is then clear to him. I do not confine myself to imposing on others to adhere to the correct principles, but impose it on myself as well. I do not do it out of compulsion or to make a show. Rather, all thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* adherence to correct principles has become a natural demand within me. Although there is some difficulty in it and it also concerns those who are under me and my followers, correct principles have to be observed and upheld. Although many of those with whom I have dealings and interactions are not aware of how I give consideration to the principles, my heart feels satisfied over the fact that I upheld the principles. It is certainly not my purpose to show off to anyone."

Interaction With Hakīm Muhammad Hāshim Sāhib

I had a strong bond with Hakīm Muhammad Hāshim Sāhib Marhūm to the extent that he eventually pledged bayʿah to me. But if I had to describe my physical condition to him, I would go personally to his house even if my physical weakness inconvenienced me. He used to feel embarrassed when I used to go to him, but I would say: "There is nothing to feel embarrassed about. The person in need has to go to the person who is going to fulfil his need, and not the opposite." However, if I had to tell him to check the pulse of anyone in my house [referring to the women], I would summon him without hesitation because this was a compelling situation and this is what correct principles demanded.

Interaction With Nephew

Is there anyone on whom I could impose my will more than on Maulwī Shabbīr ʿAlī. He is like my son, he is my nephew, he lived with me since childhood. Despite this relationship, I take

full consideration of him. If I have to say anything to him, I do not summon him to myself because he may be occupied in some essential task at the time. Instead, I would go personally to him. In fact, if he came to me for any work and I had something to say to him, I would not say it at that time. Once he returns to his place, I would get up and go personally to his place and tell him whatever was needed to be said. I do this so that he feels free to come to me whenever he needs. He must not feel that if he comes to me, I will give him some other work to do.

Interaction With House Members

After having eaten my meal, I do not remember ever asking my wife to pick the dishes. If I did say it, I must have said it unwittingly. Instead, I would say: "Have the dishes picked up." Although she is under me, I give due consideration to the authority which she has over those who are under her. After all, we have to accord due respect to those who are under us as well. After that, she can pick up the dishes herself or have them picked up. I do not even ask the domestic worker to carry out any task. Rather, I will say it to my wife and she will convey it to her. This is because the domestic worker is directly under my wife's authority, so I take due consideration of her authority in this regard. Moreover, to address a strange woman without any real need is also against modesty.

Interaction With Employees

I do not ask my employees to carry out two tasks at once. I will first ask them to carry out a particular task. Once they have completed it, I will ask them to carry out the next one. I do this so that they do not feel burdened all at once and are not burdened into remembering both tasks. I bear the burden of remembering myself. If any task is difficult, I join them in carrying it out so that they experience some ease. If any task is confusing from the very beginning, I remove the confusion myself by describing it in sequence and then hand it over to them so that it becomes easy to carry out. Similarly, if I give a task to anyone, e.g. to copy something down for me, I hand it over while it is very clear to read so that the copier does not experience any problem or confusion in reading it. I have prohibited the sending of gifts through parcel post. A major

reason for this is that the workers find it troublesome to carry parcels.

When I hand over the salary to my employees, I do it with respect by placing it in front of them. I do not throw it at them as is the mark of arrogant people. If my house folk are not at home and I have to leave the house with the worker, I occupy myself intentionally in some task so that the worker can complete his or her personal needs at ease without having to worry that I am waiting for him or her.

Interaction With Associates, Guests And Friends

I leave the better path for those who are walking with me. In the beginning, I would always walk on the side of the road so that others are not inconvenienced. But recently my leg got into a drain, so I walk in the middle as a precaution. If I write to any of my special associates for some work, I include a reply envelope. No matter how beloved a guest maybe to me and no matter how much my heart may want him to stay over, I never impose on him against his wishes. When he says that he wants to leave, I say to him with an open heart: "You may do as you like and whatever has comfort for you."

Interaction With My Father-In-Law

Pīrjī Zafar Ahmad Sāhib, the father of my junior wife, treats me as if I am his shaykh. However, I have so much respect for him in my heart as one ought to have for one's father-in-law. But he does not even know this and I am not concerned about having him to know about it. I have to just satisfy my self that I am fulfilling the respect which he deserves. I do not have to receive any favours from him.

Consideration For The Comfort Of My House Folk

When I use any item of the house, I ensure I replace it in the exact place from where I took it so that whoever kept it there does not have to search for it. My wife fills the water can at night before going to sleep. She does this as a precaution if she might need it in the course of the night. If I ever have a need to use the water, I use it and re-fill the water can and place it exactly where she had placed it so that if she needs it, she will find it filled for her to use.

A Ghayr Muqallid's Impressions

There are many fine points; how much can I say! A Ghayr Muqallid came here. When he left, he said to one of his friends: "We only claim to follow the Sunnah. I saw strict adherence to the Sunnah there [in Thānah Bhawan]. When he [Hadrat Wālā] needed a book, he got up himself and brought it from the library. He did not order anyone to bring it for him. He did his own work by himself without inconveniencing anyone. Glory to Allāh! Look at his emulation of the Sunnah and his humility. He got up himself without any hesitation and brought it himself." The man was astonished at even this small insignificant action. In short, I do not impose the correct principles to others alone but on myself as well. This is why I become extremely displeased by the disorderliness of people. I take them into full consideration but they show total disregard to me.

Relatives Must Abide By The Rules

I [the author] say: Incidentally, my eyes fell on statement number 144 of the book, *Ahsan al-ʿAzīz* volume one which contains the statements of none other than Hadrat Wālā. I consider it appropriate to quote it here. The esteemed reader will realize that Hadrat Wālā did not impose strict adherence to correct principles on outsiders only, but to his near and dears ones as well.

I was invited to Hadrat Wālā's place on one occasion. One of his relatives asked one of the workers to bring water. Hadrat Wālā reprimanded the relative immediately by saying: "The host must not address his workers in such an authoritative tone. He should rather adopt a mannerly approach by saying: 'Please bring some water.'"

A few guests came to have a meal at Hadrat Wālā's house. They were seated in the men's room. One of Hadrat Wālā's relatives was lying on a bed with his child. Hadrat Wālā looked at him with a frown and said: "What is this rude behaviour! A few people are sitting on the floor while you are lying on the bed!?" He then said: "I am very informal with my relatives because it is their right. But I cannot tolerate them acting rudely or unmannerly towards my guests."

Comfort In Following Correct Principles

I [the author] say: There are thousands of incidents which portray Hadrat Wālā's considerations but I am confining myself to these in order to avoid this section becoming too lengthy. It is a factual reality that if a person lives with Hadrat Wālā while adhering to his principles, he will see – as have many people in the past and as many are still seeing – that he will never experience such a peaceful and comfortable life anywhere else. The person will find Hadrat Wālā's Khānqāh to be an embodiment of the following couplets:

> That place is a paradise where there is no discomfort and no one has any ulterior motives with another.
>
> If the Garden of Eternity is on earth, it is this, it is this.

Expression Of Displeasure At Being Inconvenienced

Based on my long experience, I can say without hesitation that if a person with sound understanding were to observe conditions and situations deeply and justly, Allāh willing, he will not be able to present a single incident after even many years of observation wherein Hadrat Wālā initiated an unpleasant treatment of another. The harm was always initiated by the other party. The principle – the one who initiates is more wrong – applies here. Since Hadrat Wālā's blessed disposition is naturally very fine and principled, he is severely affected by disorderly matters. In fact, in most cases he experiences a fever and a headache. He therefore expresses his annoyance and, because he is naturally short-tempered, he expresses himself in a loud voice. A person who is wronged is permitted to respond in this way based on the Qur'ānic teaching:

لَا يُحِبُّ اللهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوْءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ اِلَّا مَنْ ظُلِمَ

Allāh does not like the evil of anyone to be exposed except he who has been wronged.[1]

This is certainly not severity. Hadrat Wālā says: "When another person silently pierces another with a needle, no one sees it [and no one objects]. But when I express myself loudly,

[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 148.

everyone hears it [and objects]. The oppressor is therefore considered to be the oppressed and vice versa. I become maligned while the person who vexed me sits exonerated."

Consideration To Others

Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "There is certainly sharpness in me, but no severity – all praise is due to Allāh. In fact, I take so much of consideration to the sentiments of others that they themselves may have never thought of those fine points. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, my mind goes to distant possibilities of injury and He also inspires me to abstain from them. This is what makes me even more angry – that I am showing so much of consideration to the person but he shows so much of disregard for me."

There Is No Severity In Hadrat Wālā

The reader can ponder and reflect with justness: Can a person who endeavours so hard to abstain from causing the slightest injury to others ever have the quality of severity in him? While Hadrat Wālā possesses the quality of majesty and awe in him, he also has an extreme level of mercy, kindness and soft-heartedness – qualities which are well-known and observed in him. Some incidents in this regard were related in the first volume. Allāh willing, a few more will be related in a later chapter. How can a heart which possesses so much of softness and leniency ever have severity and harshness in it? After all, this would entail the convergence of two opposites which is impossible.

Proof That He Has No Severity

I recall the statement of an intelligent person. When a resident of Delhi heard about Hadrat Wālā's system of rectification in the form of a complaint, he posed a very penetrating and intelligent question to the person. He asked: "How is the Maulānā's interaction with children?" The man replied: "He is very informal with them, extremely affectionate towards them, and they too have a lot of affinity with him." The person said: "If that is the case, he is certainly not harsh and severe because a harsh person will not even pay any attention to children."

I recall an incident concerning Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* which a person used to quote from *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*. Hadrat

ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* appointed a certain person as a zakāt collector over a certain region and despatched him to that place. As was his norm, he accompanied the person for some distance and gave him a few guidelines along the way. On the way, many children ran towards Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and embraced him. He too responded with extreme love and affection, and began kissing them. The zakāt collector expressed in astonishment: "I have never kissed my own children while you are even kissing the children of outsiders!?" On hearing this, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "Come back with me, you are not eligible to be a zakāt collector. If you cannot be affectionate towards your own children, what affection will you show to the subjects?"

I say: The quality of affection towards children which is found in Hadrat Wālā is also inherited from his forefather, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

Natural Short-Temperedness

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā does not possess even a hint of blameworthy severity. Yes, he certainly has natural short-temperedness whose virtue is established from the following Hadīth which is quoted with its translation from *at-Tasharruf*:

الحديث: الحدة تعتري خيار أمتي، هو في مسند الحسن بن سفيان من جهة الليث عن رويد بن نافع، قلت لأبي منصور الفارسي: يا أبا منصور، لو لا حدة فيك، فقال: ما يسرني بحدتي كذا وكذا وقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الحدة تعتري خيار أمتي (وسماه بعضهم يزيد بن أبي منصور وحكم عليه بالصحبة) وفي بعض الروايات بلفظ ليس أحد أولى بالحدة من صاحب القرآن لعز القرآن في جوفه (ف) ويوجد مثل هذه الحدة في أهل الله حقيقتها الغيرة على الحق وحقيقة إظهارها ترك التكلف.

Short-temperedness is experienced by the righteous people of my community. This Hadīth is related in the Musnad of Hasan ibn Sufyān from al-Layth who narrates from Ruwayd ibn Nāfiʿ who said: I said to Abū Mansūr al-Fārisī: "O Abū Mansūr! If only you were not short-tempered." He replied: "Even if I were to receive such and such [wealth] in exchange for my short-temperedness I would not exchange it. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: 'Short-temperedness is experienced by the righteous people of my community.'" (Some scholars say that his name is Yazīd

ibn Mansūr and that he is a Sahābī). Some narrations contain the following words: "No person is more eligible for short-temperedness than a person of the Qur'ān by virtue of the greatness of the Qur'ān which is in his heart." Note: Short-temperedness of this nature is found in some men of Allāh. The reality of it is their sense of honour for the truth, and the reality of their expression of it is their abandonment of formalities.

Consideration For The Benefit Of Seekers

Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "When I clearly see benefits all the time in what people consider to be severity and without which I cannot proceed forward, why should I not opt for it? What can I do if the wickedness of an evil is not settling in the mind without severity? My severity is only understood when I force a person to have himself rectified by me and he is compelled into getting himself rectified by me. There is absolutely no imposition on anyone here."

Respect Is Maintained Even When The Bond Is Severed

Every person has the right to sever his bond with me whenever he likes and to establish a bond of rectification with whomever he has affinity. In fact, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I am the only one who takes special consideration of the seeker in the sense that when I do not expect him to derive any benefit from me, I clearly say to him to go to someone else. I even say to him: "If you want to know the whereabouts of any particular mentor, I will inform you. If you want to know his name, I will tell you that as well." I take so much of consideration of him at the exact time of severing the bond that I do not place the entire burden onto him. When I sever a bond because of an absence of affinity, I do it because there can be no benefit from a shaykh without affinity. Although it is an obscene example, but an example is solely to simplify an issue. That is why there is no harm in relating it. The doctors unanimously state that as long as the sperm and egg do not coincide, a child cannot be conceived even if both – husband and wife – are healthy and strong. In the same way, even if the shaykh and the seeker are both sound, the absence of concord between their dispositions will result in the relationship being futile. It is best to sever such a bond. A union without affinity is not only unbeneficial but also results in suspicion from both parties.

If a seeker does not have affinity with any specific shaykh, it is no proof of a defect in the seeker because dispositions are naturally different. Some people have affinity with certain persons, and others with other persons. Whatever the case may be, the basis is benefiting from the affinity. It may well be that a shaykh and murīd of differing temperaments may have their respective capabilities to perfection and both may be righteous, but the absence of affinity in their temperaments would cause suspicion if the two were to establish a bond. This is similar to soda and tartaric acid. As long as the two are kept separated, there is absolute calm. No sooner they are mixed, the calm is changed to a turbulence. It is neither the fault of the soda nor of the tartaric acid. Absence of affinity is the cause. It is therefore best for both to stay away from each other.

In the same way, when I sever a bond with a seeker, it is not because of a defect in him but because of an absence of mutual affinity. In fact, I consider a seeker to be a thousand times better than me because I am fully aware of my own condition but not of his. It may well be that he is accepted in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why I consider every Muslim to be better than myself.

The Reason For Severing A Bond

I sever a bond with a seeker so that he could revert to someone else. If he cannot benefit from me because of an absence of affinity, why should I deprive him of deriving benefit elsewhere? Severing a bond based on absence of affinity is supported from a clear text. The clarity is found in the following statement which Hadrat Khidr *ʿalayhis salām* made to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*:

هٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنِكَ

This is the parting point between me and you.[1]

The parting between the two was solely because of an absence of affinity and not because of disobedience. Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> Now that you have held on to him, you must remain obedient to him. Become like Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis*

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 78.

salām who remained obedient to Hadrat Khidr *ʿalayhis salām*.

Remain patient over the actions of Hadrat Khidr *ʿalayhis salām* so that he does not have to say to you: This is the parting point between me and you.

Do not say anything even if he damages the ship. Do not utter a word of complaint even if he kills the child.

A Sign Of Affinity With A Shaykh

Some people asked me: What is the sign of affinity or lack of it with a shaykh? I replied: Although it is to do with personal taste, I will explain it to you in words. A sign of affinity with a shaykh is that a seeker must not have any objection, doubt or hesitation with regard to any statement or action of the shaykh. (An apprehension in which one is certain of the error of the opposite party is not considered). So much so, even if he cannot comprehend an explanation to his statement or action (because to try to comprehend it is the first step), he must still not have any objection to it in his heart. Instead, he must convince himself into thinking that he [the shaykh] is also a human. Even if any of his statement or action is a sin, so what? He can be pardoned through repentance or the mere grace of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the fine distinction between hesitation and apprehension. Hadrat Wālā himself praised his own above explanation by way of mentioning Allāh's favours on him. He said: "It is solely the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* that He bestowed me with the ability to explain matters which concern emotions and feelings. There are many senior scholars today. Ask them to explain the difference between hesitation and apprehension and see if they can give a convincing answer."

What Should A Person Do If He Has Objections Against His Shaykh?

Hadrat Wālā also said with regard to the above-mentioned subject: If a person has objections and misgivings against his shaykh, he must realize that he has no affinity with him. He must leave the shaykh without causing him any anxiety. The basis for deriving benefit is focus and good faith, and these are not possible in the presence of objections and misgivings. It is therefore more appropriate to leave him. But the seeker must

never be disrespectful to him for the rest of his life. After all, he was the one who had initially placed you on the path; and in this sense, he is your benefactor. In fact, even if he does things which appear to be against the Sunnah – but there is the possibility of independent judgement in them, no matter how far-fetched – he must still not be disrespectful towards him.

In short, in the case where there is no affinity, I consider it a betrayal of trust to keep a seeker confused under me merely so that the number of my disciples does not drop. I have seen some people who have no affinity with anyone nor is it expected of them to have affinity with anyone. I have found a way for them as well, because this is the way of Allāh *taʿālā*. No seeker can remain deprived in this path. I say to such people: Continue acquiring knowledge of the essentials of Dīn either through reading or asking the 'ulamā'. Continue performing your salāh, keeping fast, etc. Whatever internal spiritual ailments you perceive, you must treat them according to your own understanding. Abstain from the major sins. Continue seeking forgiveness for the remaining ones and pray to Allāh *taʿālā* thus: "O Allāh! Enable me to become conscious of them [minor sins] and to be able to treat them. If I do not have the ability to understand them, rectify them for me solely through Your grace." You are not answerable for anything more. When there is so much of latitude in my programme, and everyone knows whatever "severity" and leniency there is in it, and a person still comes to me for rectification, then if he falls into severity it is because of his own self. If anyone finds this severity to be irksome, he should not come here in the first place.

Rectification Of A Villager

I am relating an incident here so that the reader can gauge the type of severity which is found in Hadrat Wālā. An old villager travelled some distance, presented himself before Hadrat Wālā and said something. Because he was a villager, his language could not be understood and he did not know Urdu well enough.

Hadrat Wālā said: "I do not understand what you are saying. Call someone else and convey whatever you have to say through him." The man came back after a short while and said something again. Hadrat Wālā asked: "Are you the same person whom I had asked to bring someone to speak on your

behalf?" He replied: "Yes. But I could not find anyone who could speak on my behalf." Hadrat Wālā said: "Then you should have told me that you could not find anyone. You should not have come back and related your condition to me despite my prohibition. Did I waste my time in asking you to bring someone to speak on your behalf." He said: "I made a mistake."

Hadrat Wālā addressed those who were present in the assembly: "Look! People err in even simple matters as this. When I had laid down a prerequisite of bringing an interpreter and he could not find one, he should have first told me that he could not find anyone. He made no mention of that and began describing his situation to me. The fact of the matter is that people do not use their power of thinking. If not, the most ignorant person would have understood this procedure."

"I constantly say that man is a man because of his ability to think. The only difference between a man and an animal is that Allāh *taʿālā* gave man the ability to think and not to an animal. Man can think of possibilities while an animal cannot. The philosophers define a man as an animal who has the power of speech. I feel he should be defined as a thinking animal."

In other words, a man who does not use his power of thinking and does not think of possibilities is not a man; he is an animal in the form of a human. Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says with regard to such humans:

> If a human being were to be a perfect human solely by having the form of a human, (Hadrat) Ahmad (*sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*) and Abū Jahal would have been equal.
>
> What you are seeing contradicts humaneness. This is not a human, it is the covering of a human.

Hadrat Wālā then turned to the villager and said: "Only if you tell me that you could not find an interpreter will I give you a reply." The villager then said this to him. Hadrat Wālā sent someone to call Khalīfah Iʿjāz Sāhib who is a teacher in the Madrasah of the Khānqāh and said to the latter: "Ask him [the villager] what he has to say." The villager replied through Khalīfah Iʿjāz Sāhib: "I have come here to spend some time with Hadrat Wālā and to listen to Hadrat Wālā's talks."

Hadrat Wālā: "Tell me in full who you are and what work you do."

The villager: "I was studying the Qur'ān in Madrasah Ashrafīyyah in Pānīpat."

Hadrat Wālā: "Why did you give up the Qur'ān to come here? Studying the Qur'ān is more necessary."

The villager: "I will continue reading the Qur'ān here as well."

Hadrat Wālā: "Under whom?

The villager: "Under such and such person who also studied in Pānīpat."

Hadrat Wālā: "Did you obtain his approval first or are you going to impose on him?

The villager: "I asked him."

Hadrat Wālā: "Ask him in my presence."

The person was present in the assembly at the time, so he promised Hadrat Wālā that he would teach the villager.

Hadrat Wālā turned to the villager once again: "Very well, how many days will you be spending here?"

The villager: "Two months."

Hadrat Wālā: "Do you have money for your meal arrangements?"

The villager: "Yes."

Hadrat Wālā: "Did you obtain permission from your teacher before coming here? Have you displeased him and come here?"

The villager: "I came after obtaining his permission."

Hadrat Wālā: "Will you be able to obtain a letter of permission from him?"

The villager: "Yes, I can obtain it."

Hadrat Wālā: "Within how many days will you get the reply?"

The villager: "Four days."

Hadrat Wālā: "Okay, instead of four days, I will give you a chance of eight days so that it may be easy for you. Today is Wednesday, you must obtain a letter from him by next

Wednesday in which he states that you left after obtaining his permission. If you do not show me the letter by next Wednesday, you will have to leave."

After this entire conversation, Hadrat Wālā addressed the villager once again.

Hadrat Wālā: "Have you read any of my books?

The villager: "No. I can neither read Urdu nor do I understand it very well. I am only studying the Qur'ān."

Hadrat Wālā: "If you do not understand Urdu how are you going to understand my talks? Anyway there is no harm in this. There are others sitting in this assembly, you must also remain seated. But I am worried that you might misunderstand something."

The villager: "I will not misunderstand."

Hadrat Wālā: "Very well. But you must promise me you will not relate anything which you heard from me to anyone for the rest of your life."

The villager: "Very well."

This entire conversation took place through the interpreter. In the course of the conversation, Hadrat Wālā was providing a commentary to those who were present. He said to them: "I posed these questions so that no aspect of rectification and reformation is left out. Rectification can be completed and all grey areas cleared. These are not questions but teachings. I asked him to obtain his teacher's permission so that a person does not consider himself to be free as regards his actions and deeds. Whatever a person does must be done after constant consultation with his elders. Furthermore, I asked him to obtain permission so that the respect of the teacher develops in the heart."

Hadrat Wālā finally said: "Here, this is my severity. People consider proper procedures and arrangements to be severity. Now tell me, what benefit was there to me in asking these questions? They were posed solely to set right his Dīn. However, at the same time, my own Dīn improved because I also received the reward of rectification."

A Treatment For Not Being Able To See One's Own Faults

Another incident occurred in the same week. A very pious mason who has a bond with Hadrat Wālā since a long time presented himself in the Khānqāh and handed a note in which he said the following: "I have studied [Hadrat Wālā's] lectures and also *Tablīgh Dīn* [name of a book] but I cannot see my own faults. I would like to stay in Hadrat's company so that I am able to identify my faults but I have the obligation of seeing to my wife and children. I am an employed artisan, so it is difficult for me to stay over."

Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "If you were to stay with me, you will not learn anything more about your faults because I do not look for faults in anyone. Since you cannot see your own faults, it is the same whether you stay here or not." Hadrat Wālā added: "If you cannot even see your own faults then you are excused. Just continue praying to Allāh."

After writing this reply, Hadrat Wālā reprimanded and scolded the man severely in the presence of everyone in the morning assembly. Hadrat Wālā gauged from his situation that his statement about not being able to see his own faults stemmed from self-conceit. He therefore scolded him in such a manner that he came back to his senses and his mind was set right. Hadrat Wālā then delivered a long and fervent lecture which affected not only the man but all who were present. As I said, the man is a very pious man, so he was never reprimanded in this manner before, and Hadrat Wālā had always spoken to him in a soft and affectionate manner.

Unfortunately, neither I nor Janāb Hāfiz Jalīl Ahmad Sāhib – who is living in the Khānqāh since a long time and who pens certain special assemblies – was present at the time. When the two of us heard the praises of this assembly by most of those who were present, we continued asking and questioning them until we gathered a few special aspects. The gist of these is related here.

Hadrat Wālā said: "I am astonished that you cannot see your own faults. Whereas, I take an oath in Allāh's name that if a person's conscience is correct, then let alone his sins, he will even consider his acts of obedience to be acts of disobedience."

Hadrat Wālā then went into a fervour, took an oath three times and said: "I suspect the absence of sincerity in my salāh, my

fasting, my every deed, and – in fact – even in my īmān. We are nothing. Who can be more sincere than the Sahābah? A Hadīth states that there were seventy of those who participated in the Battle of Badr who feared that they were hypocrites.”

“Such was the condition of the Sahābah, and this Hadrat here does not see any faults in himself?! This is the height of senselessness.”

The man said: “I know that I have faults but I cannot identify them.”

Hadrat Wālā said: “Glory to Allāh! This is similar to saying: I know I have a pain in my body but I do not know where it is and what type it is. Is it in my stomach, in my head or in my hands and feet? What foolishness! If a person feels a pain, can he not identify where it is? This is worse than senselessness.”

Hadrat Wālā added: “In my reply to your note I wrote that if you cannot even see your own faults then you are excused. This is a reply given if we had to accept that a person cannot see his own faults.”

You wrote in your note to me that you read my lectures and also studied *Tablīgh Dīn* but still could not identify your faults. Do you think that faults are identified merely by reading books? Nothing is achieved from books unless their effects are absorbed. This is similar to a press which prints copies of the Qur’ān and copies of Hadīth as well. The press does not take any effect from printing those copies.

Hadrat Wālā also said: If a person were to appoint someone to monitor him and to inform him of any of his faults, this too will not be entirely sufficient because in most cases, if the person likes you, he will see your faults as merits; and if dislikes you, he will see your merits as faults. If a person has some pride over his deeds and conditions, and does not see any defect whatsoever in them, he must meditate and imagine himself to be right before Allāh *taʿālā* who is watching every deed and condition of his. He must then ponder and think to himself: “Is every deed and condition of mine worthy of presentation before Allāh *taʿālā* without any hesitation?” The person will then see the reality of his deeds. By Allāh, will there be any such deed which will be worthy of being presented to Him? Look at just one salāh and to what extent we fulfil its rights. Leave aside the humility and servitude which are a bit difficult, we commit

shortcomings even in the presence of mind which is not difficult at all.

Hadrat Wālā continued speaking on this subject for a long time with much fervour and passion, and continued scolding the man. He eventually said to him: "You are no longer permitted to write any letter to me nor do you have the permission to come here until you begin seeing your own faults. And that too, not just one or two faults, but many faults. Although I will only treat one fault at a time when the time comes for you to be treated, I will only commence the treatment after you send me a long and detailed list of your faults. During this period, you are only permitted to write to me to ask about my well-being and to request for prayers. You are not permitted any other contact."

This impressive lecture was delivered in the afternoon and the man departed soon thereafter. On his return to his hometown, he wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā. His letter and Hadrat Wālā's reply is quoted verbatim from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. The reader will be able to gauge the effect which Hadrat Wālā's single reprimand had and how his condition changed completely. Look at how a destructive spiritual ailment – which ought to be referred to as a tuberculosis because a person suffering from it does not consider himself to be ill – was uprooted with just one bitter prescription. Initially, the man could not see a single fault within himself, but when his eyes really opened, he saw nothing but faults. He became so convinced about the existence of those faults that he is prepared to take oaths that he has them. Previously he considered his heart to be a varnished box which was filled with valuables, and now he saw the same heart to be completely immersed in filth. The fat which had accumulated on his eyes for so many years now melted with a single flame. The man's letter and Hadrat Wālā's reply is now presented to the reader.

The Man's Letter

Ever since I returned from Thānah Bhawan, I have been carrying out every deed with reflection, pondering and introspection. Hadrat mentioned in his special assembly that when I do any deed, I must think to myself if I can do it right before Allāh *taʿālā* or not. By implementing this advice, I realized that whatever I say and do is all worthless. No deed of mine is worthy of presentation before Allāh *taʿālā*. Previously I

could not see my own faults. This was solely out of disregard and inattentiveness. After Hadrat's reprimand, I realized that my heart which I had considered to be a varnished box filled with unique and priceless items, was really filled with excreta and nothing else. I therefore repented from my previous assumption that I cannot see any faults in myself. The effect of Hadrat's reprimand was that I began seeing my faults very clearly and I can take the most solemn oaths that I have these faults in me. I now seek permission to present my faults to Hadrat and request a treatment for them.

Hadrat Wālā's Reply

Congratulations. This excreta of submission will mix with the soil, turn to manure, and will result in the sprouting of various types of spiritual foods. I am praying for you and permit you to present your faults to me. However, do not present more than one fault in a letter.

Glory to Allāh! Look at what a beautiful reply and the fine manner in which he changed the man's grossness to exquisiteness. He did not do it just metaphorically but literally.

The ability to express the reality in an appealing metaphorical sense without changing the reality is an ability which I saw in none but Hadrat Wālā. There are countless examples of this which are filled in Hadrat Wālā's writings and speeches. I am not quoting them here for fear of lengthiness.

Every Person Is Not Worthy Of Good Treatment

When the above-quoted letter of the mason reached Hadrat Wālā [and he read it] he handed it over to me and said: "Here, the mason has come to his senses. He was never reprimanded before because he is a righteous person. This is why he considered himself to be completely devoid of faults."

Hadrat Wālā went on to say: "Every person is not worthy of good treatment. People tell me not to be harsh and severe. How can I not be such when they cannot be rectified without severity? Look at the mason's case. Kind treatment of ten to twelve years did not reform him in any way. It actually caused him to deteriorate. But ten to twelve minutes' of scolding put him right. His mind was set in order and the devil in him came out. Do you think he could have been reformed without severity? Never. Let the people now open their eyes and look

carefully, and ask themselves if this situation demanded consideration and leniency. Do they think that rectification can be achieved through softness and leniency in every situation? If an ailment requires a laxative, can it be treated with stimulants? Those who advise me to be soft towards the seekers are similar to a person advising me to give a stimulant to a patient who actually needs a laxative. Or an abscess which is filled with harmful substances and needs to be surgically removed but people advise that it should be merely anointed and bandaged even if it means allowing the harmful substances to spread inside and then cause the entire body to rot. They will tolerate that but not the removal of all the harmful substances in a single operation."

The Difference Between A Patient And A Visitor

Hadrat Wālā was speaking on a similar subject on another occasion. He said: "Two types of people go to a doctor. (1) The one who is there merely to meet the doctor. He is given a special seat, the two engage in a jovial conversation, he is offered something to drink, he is presented with betel leaf and cardamom, a perfume is offered to him, and so on. (2) The one who is there to be treated. He is made to sit in the queue of sick people, he is not given the opportunity to speak more than necessary, and bitter medicines are prescribed for him. If anyone complains in this regard, he is sent out of the clinic. If a sick person feels he should be treated in the same manner as the one who merely came for a social visit, then it is really foolishness on his part because he will not achieve the objective for which he came to the clinic in the first place, i.e. to be treated and regain his health. In fact, if he is suffering from colic and he is given a sherbet drink, his colic will worsen and lead him to death."

The Need For Planning In Every Situation

Hadrat Wālā said on the same subject: "Planning is essential – not only in Sufism – but in every part of life. For a teacher to punish his student, parents to hit their children for the sake of discipline, rulers to punish their subjects and criminals are generally accepted without any reservation." There were times when Hadrat Wālā resorted to severity and said: "Look! This severity removed ignorance. If prevailing norms are given

preference over prudence, it would mean that people will have to remain in ignorance for their entire lives."

A Person Suffering From Casting Evil Glances Is Treated

Incidents similar to the ones related previously are observed and witnessed all the time. How much more can I write? I myself know of many incidents in which Hadrat Wālā's diplomacy completely uprooted severe illnesses from the seekers in a matter of a few moments. A seeker who had a special bond with Hadrat Wālā began suffering from casting evil glances. He was so overwhelmed by it that it seemed impossible to free himself from it. When he could not find any way out by himself, he reverted to Hadrat Wālā by writing to him. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "You knew all the different treatments for it. I could not think of what new treatment to prescribe. I did not write the full reply because I was waiting for Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire me with a new treatment. Today, in the fajr salāh, Allāh *taʿālā* placed a new treatment in my heart. Since you do not know it, I am writing it here. Allāh willing, it will be of benefit to you. The treatment is that if you commit this mistake, you are not permitted to write to me for two months. Each time you cast an evil gaze will result in a separate two months. For example, if you cast evil gazes six times in one day, you are not permitted to correspond with me for one full year. In short, when the punishment for one error ends, the next one will commence."

The moment these guidelines reached the person, his entire situation changed. He took so much precautions that when he used to walk in public, he would place his hand over his forehead [like a cap] so that he could see nothing but the ground. If he had any need to look at anything or anyone, he would open his eyelids very slightly so that he cannot identify who is approaching – whether it is a man or a woman. The prohibition of corresponding with Hadrat Wālā was extremely difficult for him because of his special bond with him. This is why he made a firm resolution that – Allāh willing – he will not allow this punishment to be meted out to him even once in his life. He wrote to Hadrat Wālā and informed him of what steps he had taken to prevent this from happening. Hadrat Wālā was very pleased and wrote back saying: "I too expected from Allāh *taʿālā* that it would not come down to punishment even once."

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and Hadrat Wālā's blessings, the sin which appeared to be impossible to give up now became impossible to commit. The man was completely cured from such an evil and major sin. Hadrat Wālā added in his letter to the man: "It is not necessary to go to extremes. It is enough not to cast a gaze wittingly."

A Seeker's Admission

A seeker was involved in an evil and was warned about it. He then spoke about the excellent manner in which Hadrat Wālā steered him and the benefit which he derived from his supervision. He wrote: "The committing of that evil does not even cross my mind. I have strong hope that through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā, I will never commit this evil."

There are countless incidents and observations of this nature. Hadrat Wālā receives many letters of affirmation of this type. Hadrat Wālā periodically reads these letters to those who are present without divulging the identity of those who wrote the letters. He uses them as proofs of the benefit of his system of rectification through diplomacy, and silences those who make objections against this system. These incidents and observations are ample testimony to the effectiveness of Hadrat Wālā's system and his brilliance in the sense that the devil is immediately removed from such people, their minds are enlightened, and all satanic thoughts disappear.

Like his other qualities, this quality of Hadrat Wālā was inherited from his forefather, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* from whose mere approach Satan used to flee. The following statements of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are testimonies in this regard:

عن أنس رضي الله عنه: الشيطان يفر من حس عمر رضي الله عنه[1]

Anas radiyallāhu ʿanhu *narrates: Satan flees from the mere perception of ʿUmar* radiyallāhu ʿanhu.

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها أن الشيطان يفر من عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه.[2]

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[1] كنز العمال بحوالة ديلمي.

[2] كنز العمال، تاريخ حاكم.

ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā *narrates: Satan flees from ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb* radiyallāhu ʿanhu.

إني لأنظر إلى شياطين الجن والإنس قد فروا من عمر رضي الله عنه.[1]

I see the devils from jinn and mankind fleeing from ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu.

إن الشيطان ليخاف منك يا عمر.[2]

O ʿUmar! Satan is terrified of you.

يا ابن الخطاب، والذي نفسي بيده ما لقيك الشيطان سالكًا فَجًّا إلا سلك فجا غير فجك.

O Ibn al-Khattāb! When Satan sees you going on a particular path, he most certainly takes a different path [in order to avoid you].

Speaking Out The Truth Must Result In Objectors

There is an Arabic saying which says: "The truth is bitter." A reformer who is so frank in speaking out the truth can never be loved by all despite possessing all the causes of adoration. This has been a continuous practice when it comes to reformers of the Muslim community. Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* exposed the wrongs of the 'ulamā' and spiritual masters without fearing any criticism. This is especially so in his *Kitāb al-Ghurūr*. Consequently, fatwās of unbelief were issued against him and his book, *Ihyā' ʿUlūm ad-Dīn*, was burnt. Later on, when the truth became manifest, the disrespect which was shown to him was tried to be atoned by writing the very book which was burnt with golden ink. When relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā says: "Based on the principle that contemporariness results in mutual dislike, people disapprove of my style of rectification. Allāh willing, they will value and appreciate it later on, and offer it as a proof. I have borne disrepute for myself and cleared the way for others."

This special methodology is supported by a Hadīth which is related to Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* himself. The Hadīth, its translation and Hadrat Wālā's explanation is quoted here.

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[1] مشكوة باب مناقب عمر رضي الله عنه.

[2] أيضا.

عن علي رضي الله عنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: رحم الله عمر يقول الحق وإن كان مرا تركه الحق وما له من صديق.

May Allāh taʿālā *send down His special mercy on ʿUmar. He speaks the truth even if it may be (rationally or naturally) bitter (and unpleasant). (This quality is overwhelming in him on a special level. His frankness in speaking the truth has made him such that he does not have such a type of friend who (normally remains with a person who overlooks and concedes).*

The explanations in the translation remove three doubts. (1) Did other Companions *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* not possess this quality of speaking out the truth? (2) Did ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* not have any friend? (3) Where there people in this excellent group [of Sahābah] who considered the truth to be bitter?

The answer to the first question is that the essential quality was found in all the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, but when it is overwhelmingly found on a special level in a person, then specific merits with regard to them are mentioned. There are different levels of the truth. One level is when expressing it is obligatory. The next one is when expressing it is preferable. The first level is found in all the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, in fact, in all people of the truth. As for the second level, the pious elders respond to it differently. Some of them give preference to politeness over prudence, and therefore remain silent. Others respond in the opposite manner and therefore say whatever they have to say. The first level is when the quality is overwhelming in a person while the second is of the actual quality itself.

The answer to the second question is that a special type of friendship is negated. In other words, had Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* gave preference to politeness over prudence, he would have had friends similar to him, but not in the present situation.

The answer to the third question is that natural bitterness and offence, and not practising on its demands does not negate goodness. You do get some people in every era who also experience rational bitterness, even though they were very few at the time. My concise explanations in the translation make reference to all these answers.

Maulānā Hamīd Hasan Sāhib Replies To An Objector

I recall another incident which supports Hadrat Wālā's method of rectification. A naïve objector said to Maulānā Hamīd Hasan Sāhib Deobandī, a teacher at Madrasah Saʿīdīyyah Jalālābād, that – Allāh forbid – Hadrat Wālā does not have Akhlāq-e-Muhammadī (the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*). Look at the beautiful reply which the Maulānā gave to this objector: "My dear fellow, do you know the entire list of the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* or do you know certain specific ones? Pick up any book of Hadīth and you will find that apart from other chapters, it also contains chapters on the meting out of punishments, retributions and chastisements. These are also part of the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Resorting to diplomacy when needed and meting out punishment when crimes are committed are included in the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*."

Reprimand Becomes A Source Of Affection

In the light of all the above, the reader must have understood fully well that Hadrat Wālā's method of rectification is totally in line with sound disposition and the age-old practice of the righteous predecessors, and in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Clear proofs and evidences for this were given in detail. Despite this, Hadrat Wālā always has a critical eye towards his self. Although he resorts to diplomacy whenever the situation demands it, after every such incident he expresses his sorrow and regret by his words, conditions and actions. In fact, there were times that this sorrow and regret prevented him from falling asleep at night. There were also times when I personally saw Hadrat Wālā asking the person to pardon him, and making up for it with monetary atonements on other occasions. I always saw and personally experienced that his disapproval was a key to additional affection, attention and special prayers for the person. The person who is reprimanded himself perceives spiritual progress after Hadrat Wālā's treatment. To sum up, Hadrat Wālā's reprimanding is a manifestation of the following supplication of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَتَّخِذُ عِنْدَكَ عَهْدًا لَّنْ تُخْلِفَنِيْهِ فَاِنَّمَا اَنَا بَشَرٌ، فَاَيَّمَا مُؤْمِنٍ اٰذَيْتُهُ اَوْ شَتَمْتُهُ اَوْ جَلَّدْتُّهُ اَوْ لَعَنْتُهُ، فَاجْعَلْهَا لَهُ صَلوٰةً وَّزَكوٰةً وَّقُرْبَةً تُقَرِّبُهُ بِهَا اِلَيْكَ.

O Allāh! I am taking from You a promise which You must never go back on. I am only a human. Therefore, whichever Muslim I harm, abuse, strike or curse; make it in his favour a [source of] mercy, purity, and a means of gaining proximity to You.

Preference Is Given To A Seeker's Wellbeing

Hadrat Wālā repeatedly says with regard to his style of rectification: "It is completely against my nature. It is followed by distress and regret. I think to myself: 'Instead of addressing him in the manner in which I did, I could have addressed him in this way. Instead of explaining to him in this manner, I could have done it in that manner. Instead of resorting to this method, I could have resorted to that.' However, at the exact time, the expedience of rectification supersedes everything else and I do not look at any other expedience. This only applies when I consider it my responsibility to rectify. If I ever disregard this responsibility, then – Allāh willing – I will always display fine character. My fundamental objective is to have nothing to do with anyone and to remain secluded from all."

Noble Thoughts About Objectors

It was also because of his self-criticism that Hadrat Wālā never tried to refute those who raised objections against him. Instead, if he felt that any of the objections were valid – especially those which were made with good intentions – he would accept them and act accordingly.

Hadrat Wālā Reviews His Methodology Because Of An Objector

In consideration of the above, Hadrat Wālā reviews his methodology periodically. This is borne out from his book, *at-Tabdīl min at-Tathqīl ilā at-Taʿdīl*, which Hadrat Wālā wrote just recently in response to a letter of objection written by an immature adviser. It contains details about Hadrat Wālā's change in his manner of rectification in consideration of ill-feeling from certain quarters. Hadrat Wālā then summarized it, had the summary written by a calligrapher, and keeps it in front of him so that he is conscious of it, does not forget when the time comes, and it becomes easy for him to adhere to the methodology which he laid down. From this we can gauge how

much importance Hadrat Wālā attached to personally practising on essential rules and regulations. The above-mentioned article, its addendum, the above-mentioned adviser's repentance and Hadrat Wālā's reply will – Allāh willing – be quoted soon from *Ahsan al-ʿAzīz*.

The Objector Repents

Firstly, the objector, in his fervour for revenge, was overcome by his self and wrote whatever he liked. At the same time, in order to put a veil over his egotism, he assured Hadrat Wālā of his well-wishing, love and sincere intention. But soon thereafter, through the blessing of studying Hadrat Wālā's book, *at-Takashshuf*, his eyes opened automatically, he came to his senses, and wrote a letter of repentance immediately. It will be quoted soon. In it, he expresses and acknowledges his evils in clear and explicit words. He makes mention of his own wretchedness, humiliation, audacity, boldness, hypocrisy, fanaticism, obstinacy, deprivation, loss in both worlds, eligibility for reprimand, Hadrat Wālā's correctness, his own uselessness as a rectifier, and the impossibility of atonement for his crime. Finally, he expresses his regret and remorse, and requests for pardon. He is not the only one. There are countless others who retracted from their objections and acknowledged their mistakes. This shows that the truth always triumphs.

Divine Punishment Befalls Objectors

Some of the objectors retracted once they understood the reality. Others became prone to divine punishments and calamities as a result of their audaciousness and ill-feelings. Peace, tranquillity, yearning, enthusiasm and all other forms of happiness and contentment disappeared from their hearts. They became losers internally and externally, and were compelled into regret and repentance.

Despite this, Hadrat Wālā – in all his humility – considered these punishments which befell them to be incidental. He never considered himself to be of such a level [where calamities befall people who taunt him], and also because this is not Allāh's continuous practice. He said to those who considered the calamities to be the consequences of their disrespect towards him that they were wrong. However, as per the Hadīth:

I declare war on the one who antagonizes My friend.

And the statements of the spiritual masters:

> We experienced reward and punishment on many occasions in this world. Those who remained with the residue have always risen to the top.
>
> Allāh *taʿālā* did not disgrace a nation as long as it did not hurt the feelings of His friends.

Those who hurt and taunt the friends of Allāh *taʿālā* are, in most cases, made to suffer spiritual and physical pains and calamities. Sometimes, they themselves realize and perceive this. Some of them realize their folly and repent.

The Harm Of Disrespecting A Shaykh

To be audacious and disrespectful especially after becoming a murīd makes one even more eligible for calamities. Hadrat Wālā himself says in this regard: "In this relationship, in certain aspects sinning is not as harmful as disrespect. The reason for this is that sinning is connected to Allāh *taʿālā*. Since He is pure from being affected by sinning, a person is pardoned once he repents and his previous bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is re-established as it had been. On the other hand, disrespect is when it is towards one's shaykh who is a human. A seeker's disrespect towards him creates ill-feeling in his heart. This ill feeling is an obstacle to receiving the blessings of the shaykh."

Hadrat Wālā continues: "Hadrat Hājī Sāhib explains this with a beautiful example. He says: If mud is loaded on the drain of a roof, and then it rains, then although the water which falls on the roof is absolutely pure and clear, when it goes through the drain and comes down the pipe, it will be dirty and murky. In the same way, when the blessings and effulgence which descend into the heart of a shaykh are transferred into the heart of a seeker who caused the heart of his shaykh to be murky towards him, they will be transferred in a murky form. Instead of the seeker's heart being illuminated and purified, it will continue becoming murkier."

Hadrat Wālā adds: The disastrous effect of disturbing the heart of one's shaykh is that a seeker never experiences peace of heart in this world. He remains restless throughout his life. However, since it is not necessary for every action which

causes displeasure to the shaykh to be a sin, the seeker's action does not result in any direct religious harm, but in most cases, becomes a means for indirect religious harm. The sequence of events are as follows: The displeasure of the shaykh results in the removal of peace and tranquillity from the seeker's heart. The absence of tranquillity causes shortcomings in actions. Shortcomings in actions result in religious harm and punishment in the Hereafter. If, in the case where the seeker has no tranquillity, he imposes on himself to do good deeds and takes the courage to continue in this way, he will not experience any religious harm. But in most cases, when there is no tranquillity, there are shortcomings in good deeds. This inevitably results in indirect religious harm. This is because the impetus – tranquillity – is no longer present. And most people find it difficult to carry out good deeds in the absence of an impetus."

Hadrat Wālā's Humility

Hadrat Wālā also says: "Although I am nothing, whenever I put my faith and confidence in any person and then displeased him in any way, then the same harms will result as happens when displeasing the spiritual masters and accepted servants."

I [the compiler] say: This is Hadrat Wālā's extreme humility. After all, the fact that he is a centre of guidance, at the head of the spiritual masters of the time, the noblest of the perfect accepted servants is clear as the light of day. Such complete and all-encompassing religious, spiritual and external blessings are not reaching the creation of Allāh *taʿālā* as they are from him. In fact, no one comes close to him in this regard. This is a glaring, clear and undeniable fact. Why should this not be the case when – according to the erudite scholars – it is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to place in the world an imām through whom the truth and falsehood is distinguished! Since he is there for the guidance of Allāh's servants, he is helped and supported by Allāh *taʿālā*. Therefore, whatever emanates from his mouth is always the truth. A personality of this type is honoured with such a special acceptance and love from Allāh *taʿālā* that if anyone in his era does not have faith and confidence in him, then although he is not a sinner, he is deprived of special blessings.

No pious personality of Hadrat Wālā's calibre has been externally seen in these times nor have we heard of anyone like

him. Therefore, we are almost convinced that Hadrat Wālā seems to be the manifestation of that continuous norm of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best His mysteries and the mysteries of His friends.

As I had promised earlier, I am now quoting Hadrat Wālā's article titled, *at-Tabdīl min at-Tathqīl ilā at-Taʿdīl*, together with its addendum, the objector's letter of repentance and Hadrat Wālā's reply to it. It is quoted verbatim from *Ahsan al-ʿAzīz*.

At-Tabdīl Min at-Tathqīl Ilā at-Ta'dīl

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

On the 1st of Jumādā al-Ūlā 1354 A.H. I received a letter from a certain place in which the writer openly spoke out against my method of rectification and reformation, and requested me to follow the normal methods. I received several letters of this nature before this as well but none of them made claims to desiring good. I did not consider those letters to be worthy of much attention because of the obstinate tone in which they were written. However, I was influenced by them to a certain extent and I did make certain changes to my methodology. Furthermore, I am in the habit of casting a critical eye on my own condition, so this too had a special influence in making changes. [Hadrat Wālā makes references to *Ahsan al-ʿAzīz* in which he mentions some of these changes. These have not been translated]. However, this last letter which I received – although it is a clear testimony to the writers ignorance on the fundamentals and subsidiary matters of Sufism – the writer tries to convince me of his well-wishing, love and sincere intentions; and I have no right to refute these claims of his. Bearing in mind his ignorance and his antagonistic tone, and at the same time not considering my self to be free from dangers, I decided to look into this matter with special attention.

After looking into it I came to the conclusion that my present methodology is similar to that treatment of a physician who pays full attention to uprooting all the causes of the illness in order to attain perfect health. In order to realize this objective, he does not bother about the bitter medicines which he prescribes and the objections of the patient. He prescribes the most beneficial medicines, tries to make the patient abstain

from the most trivial harms, and expresses his displeasure over the patient's slightest shortcoming and disregard. If kindness is not beneficial, he resorts to sternness and severity.

As for the writer of this letter, his example is like an incomplete treatment given by a physician who is happy with the incomplete recovery of his patient, and only prescribes medicine which his patient takes happily. He is happy even though the illness has not been uprooted, but merely reduced; even if it returns with full force, or it was considerably reduced but not uprooted. This results in the illness returning to him. Similarly, the physician is lenient towards him with regard to what he can and what he cannot consume. He reprimands him for consuming destructive foods but permits him to consume those which could cause him to become more ill or weak.

This is the difference between my present methodology and the recommendation of the writer of this letter. As for the difference in the results between these two, it is crystal clear. In the first case, there is total benefit although it is not so widespread as a result of the ingratitude and ignorance of the patients. In the second case, the benefit is not total, although the large crowds of feeble-hearted and immature patients gives the impression that the benefit is widespread.

After looking at these differences, I pondered over my original methodology. I gave preference to it and opted for it because just as it is better as regards its objective, it is also better because it is in line with the principles of Sufism. The incidents related to the treatments adopted by the spiritual masters (of which there are thousands of examples in the books on this subject) clearly and unhesitatingly support this methodology. As for the Qur'ān and Sunnah, there is support from them with hesitation from some texts and no hesitation from most texts. These are mentioned in various places in my speeches and writings, and can be collectively found in *Masā'il as-Sulūk, Takashshuf* and *Tasharruf*.

Anyway, this had been my methodology based on the above-mentioned academic and practical preference. Nevertheless, as a precaution I still looked at another angle based on this letter which I received. The angle is as follows: I am bearing a heavy burden for the benefit of certain sick patients while they consider it burdensome. In such a situation, the extreme importance which the physician is attaching to his treatment is

a manifestation of the following verse: "can we impose it upon you while you are averse to it?"[1] which is really unnecessary. So in order to make it easy for both sides, I consider it appropriate to suffice with that amount which the patient can tolerate and to apprise him of his shortcomings so that I will, to a certain extent, protect myself from shirking my responsibility. The habits of the masses will also be taken into consideration. After that, they can themselves see what is beneficial to them and what is not. In such a situation, this type of rectification will be reduced to a normal and general propagation in which the following is said about the one doing the propagation:

قُلْ يٰاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ.

Say: O people! The truth from your Sustainer has reached you. Now, whoever comes onto the [straight] path, finds the path for his own good. And whoever wanders astray shall remain wandering astray to his own detriment. I am not responsible for you.[2]

As for the previous special method of rectification and disciplining, the following Hadīth applies:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُوْلٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you is accountable for his flock.

If I find anyone offended by my original method, it will be permissible for me to adopt another methodology because my relationship with the seekers is not one of a shepherd and his flock. Since the temperament of most of the seekers is as described, I have decided to adopt this permissible methodology. The people will be saved from bitter pills while I, in exchange for my burdens, will be saved from their verbal abuses. If anyone seeks total and complete benefit, this defective benefit coupled with my books will – Allāh willing – be sufficient for him. Why should I stress myself unnecessarily?

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 28.
[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 108.

It is difficult to list the finer points and peculiarities of this new methodology. This article has been written to inform the people of this change in methodology. It can have two titles depending on which angle it is looked at. (1) I considered my previous methodology to be a balanced one. I now lowered myself and provided more concessions and ease. In such a case, its title will be *at-Tanzīl min at-Taʿdīl ilā at-Tas-hīl* (coming down from a balanced methodology to an easy one). (2) The objectors considered my previous methodology to be severe and heavy, and the new methodology to be a balanced one. In such a case, its title will be *at-Tabdīl min at-Tathqīl ilā at-Taʿdīl* (changing from a heavy methodology to one that is balanced). Since this change was made in consideration to the disposition of the masses, I am giving it the second title in consideration to them. Allāh *taʿālā* alone is our guide in all matters.

I know fully well that some objectors or immature associates will not be satisfied with even this much. They will suggest further ease and concessions. But I excuse myself from doing this because there is no further concession in the field of rectification. Instead, it will clearly entail giving up rectification entirely. However, if special circumstances demand the giving up of rectification completely, e.g. the presence of fully qualified reformers and rectifiers or – Allāh forbid – the absence of those who are worthy of rectification, then at such a time I will consider it permissible to give up. This refers to the giving up of general rectification. As for specific giving up of rectification, that can be done even now in the case where there is no affinity with a person.

The following verse is proof for the first case:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ اُمَّةٌ يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى الْخَيْرِ

Let there be a group from among you inviting towards good.

The following Hadīth is proof for the second case:

إذا رأيت شحا مطاعا وهوى متبعا ودنيا موثرة وإعجاب كل ذي رأي برأيه فعليك بخاصة نفسك ودع أمر العامة.

If you see an avaricious person having a following, people obeying their desires, people giving preference to this world, and each person conceited about his own opinions, then worry about yourself only and cast aside the masses.

Hopefully, these are the last words on this subject. Our trust is solely in Allāh *taʿālā* in all our affairs.

3rd Jumādā al-Ūlā 1354 A.H.

Addendum

The reality of this change can only be gauged through observation. However, a short comparison between the past and present is provided for those who are to come.

Past	Present
1. If I had to say anything to a person, I would avoid using a third person to convey the message because of the possibility of changes in the original message (even if done unwittingly). I used to address the person directly, which sometimes caused the person to feel overwhelmed.	1. The person is apprised of his error through a third person. As far as possible, the person who is appointed to convey the message is one who is not expected to make any changes to it.
2. The reasons for the error used to be explained, and they appeared to be claims. Although they were explained without proofs, the natural effect of a claim is denial to accept one's error.	2. After getting the person to accept the preludes to the objective, he himself is made to accept the objective. Acceptance of the objective is really an acknowledgement from his side which naturally results in acceptance.
3. When approaching a person directly and he replies in an unprincipled manner, it used to result in my tone becoming sharp. A person lacking in understanding considered this to be displeasure, resulting in his grief and sorrow.	3. Now that I appoint an intermediary, there is no possibility of this happening. Instead of the person becoming grief-stricken, he feels ashamed.
4. Once my discussion ended with a person and I passed my decision, he was informed of it. This appeared to be like a governmental edict which sometimes resulted in ill-	4. After making the person accept his mistake, he is asked to decide for himself on what steps should be taken. If his decision is insufficient, its error is shown to him and he is

feeling.

asked to come up with a new decision. In most cases, after he makes a final decision, I provide further concessions which he considers to be a boon and accepts happily.

5. I used to issue a judgement immediately for several reasons: (1) It was my nature to do so. (2) Because of my many other occupations. (3) To save the person from the stress of having to wait. After passing my decision, there were times when I felt that there could be causes to review the case and the decision.

5. Bearing in mind the advantage of reviewing my decision, I give preference to it over the previously listed reasons, and delay slightly in passing my decision.

Despite the above, I neither consider my opinion to be the best nor am I proud over my past and present methodology. I am a human regarding whom Allāh *taʿālā* says:

خُلِقَ الْاِنْسَانُ ضَعِيْفًا

Man has been created weak.

خُلِقَ الْاِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

Man has been created hasty.

This shows a defect in man's knowledge and actions. Anyway, my intention is still:

اِنْ اُرِيْدُ اِلَّا الْاِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ

All I want is rectification to the best of my capability.

Despite this, my prayer with regard to the above intention is:

وَمَا تَوْفِيْقِيْ اِلَّا بِاللهِ، عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ اُنِيْبُ

My inspiration is solely from Allāh. I have placed my trust in Him and to Him do I turn.

Together with seeking forgiveness, I make this prayer which is derived from a teaching of S̲āli h̲ *ʿalayhis salām*:

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ رَبِّيْ ثُمَّ اَتُوْبُ اِلَيْهِ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ مُّجِيْبٌ

I seek forgiveness from my Sustainer. I then turn to Him in repentance. Surely my Sustainer is near, responding to my prayer.

The above steps and precautions are in the majority of the cases and, according to the principle, the sum total rule is applied to the majority. Thus, there is also the possibility of exception to the above rules either because of certain imposing reasons or due to forgetfulness. All these stages are only applicable where I expect affinity between myself and a seeker. If this is not the case, I will practise on the way of Khid̲r *ʿalayhis salām* when he said:

هٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكَ

This is the point of separation between you and I.

Note: The very same objector's letter of repentance was received on 11 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1354 A.H. The letter and H̲ad̲rat Wālā's reply is quoted here.

The letter:

Respected and honourable Maulānā S̲āh̲ib…

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rah̲matullāhi wa barakātuh wa rid̲wānuh

Sometime ago, this wretched fellow [referring to himself] came to H̲ad̲rat Wālā without permission. Your respected self reprimanded me severely for which you were fully entitled and I deserved. On returning to my place, I assumed the position of a rectifier and wrote a letter to you in which I stated that you should not have become so angry and annoyed. This was not the way of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I used some very audacious words. This hypocrite [referring to himself] then read your explanations about harsh and obstinate persons in your book, *Takashshuf*. I am most ashamed of myself. I was most daring and bold in taking the loss in this world and the Hereafter. Will you pardon me – for Allāh's sake – for my audaciousness or is my crime unpardonable? Please pardon me.

The reply:

As-salāmu ʿalaykum

If by pardon you mean that I must not take you to account on the day of Resurrection, not curse you in this world, and abstain from back-biting you, then you are pardoned. Consequently, I did not mention your name to anyone nor the place where you live out of fear that someone might develop hatred for you. If by pardon you mean that I must have a relationship with you as I have with my friends, or permit you to correspond with me or come to meet me, then you are not pardoned so that you do not wrong anyone.

12 Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1354 A.H.

Concern For The Objector's Welfare

One point needs to be pondered over. Despite the displeasure which Hadrat Wālā experienced on account of the objector's audacious tone and foolish objections, Hadrat Wālā did not even read the objector's letter to anyone. Instead, he tore it there and then as is his habit. He did not even give any indication to the objector's name and address. When I asked Hadrat Wālā the region where he lives, he refused to tell me. He said: "I do not want anyone to have any dislike for that region also, and I do not want my friends of that place to feel ashamed in any way."

Clarification Of A Fine Point

In his reply to the objector, Hadrat Wālā also taught us a very fine point, viz. pardon is one thing and meeting of the hearts is another. Gladness of the heart is not within one's control. There are some instances where it never returns once it leaves the heart. Hadrat Wālā quotes the incident of Hadrat Wahshī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in support of this. This incident is a clear text on this subject. Hadrat Wālā says: Whose heart can be more illuminated, pure, wide and open than the heart of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*? When his blessed heart did not experience any gladness from the Islam of Hadrat Wahshī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, who are we? This despite the fact that Hadrat Wahshī's *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* crime was certainly pardoned after he embraced Islam. After all, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself said:

الإسلام يهدم ما كان قبله

Embracing Islam destroys whatever was committed before it.

However, the nature of his crime was such that although he was pardoned, its effect in the form of grief remained in the blessed heart of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The reason for this was that Hadrat Wahshī had mercilessly martyred Hadrat Hamzah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in the Battle of Uhud. Whenever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked at Hadrat Wahshī, he was immediately reminded of that scene and his heart experienced a sort of recoiling from him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* eventually said to him:

هل تستطيع أن تغيب وجهك عني

Is it possible for you to keep your face away from me?

Hadrat Wahshī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* went away to Syria and, as per the request of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, never showed his face to him again. A poet says:

أُرِيْدُ وِصَالَهُ وَيُرِيْدُ هِجْرِيْ – فَأَتْرُكُ مَا أُرِيْدُ لِمَا يُرِيْدُ

I want to be with him but he wants to be aloof from me. I am therefore giving up my desire for his sake.

This incident is quoted from *Bukhārī Sharīf* from the chapter on the Battle of Uhud, under the heading, The Killing of Hamzah.

قال وحشي في حديث طويل: حتى قدمت على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فلما راني قال: انت وحشي؟ قلت: نعم. قال: انت قتلت حمزة؟ قلت: قد كان من الأمر ما بلغك. قال: فهل تستطيع أن تغيب وجهك عني؟ قال: فخرجت...

Wahshī relates in a lengthy Hadīth: I eventually presented myself before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. *When he saw me, he asked: "Are you Wahshī?" I replied: "Yes." He said: "You are the one who killed Hamzah?" I replied: "The information which you received is true." He said: "Is it possible for you to keep your face away from me?" I then departed…*

A few necessary aspects related to this incident are quoted from *Fath al-Bārī*:

فلما خرج وفد الطائف ليسلموا تغميت على المذاهب فقلت ألحق باليمن أو الشام أو غيرها. وفي رواية الطيالسي: فأردت الهرب إلى الشام. فقال لي رجل: ويحك، والله ما يأتي محمدا (صلى الله عليه وسلم) أحد بشهادة الحق إلا خلّى عنه. قال: فانطلقت فما شعر بي إلا وأنا قائم على رأسه أشهد بشهادة الحق. وأيضا في الفتح: وعند يونس بن بكير في المغازي عند ابن اسحاق قال: فقيل لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: هذا وحشي. فقال: دعوة رجل واحد للإسلام أحب إلي من قتل ألف كافر. وعند الطبراني فقال: يا وحشي أخرج فقاتل في سبيل الله كما كنت تصد عن سبيل الله.

When a delegation from Tā'if went to embrace Islam, I was at a loss as to where I should go. Should I go to Yemen, Syria or some other place?" A narration of Tayālisī states: "I decided to flee to Syria. A man said to me: 'What is it with you? No matter who goes to Muhammad [sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam] to testify to the truth, he lets him free.' So I decided to go to him. Before I could even realize it, I was standing before him and embracing Islam." Yūnus ibn Bukayr states in al-Maghāzī from Ibn Is-hāq who said: Someone said to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam: "This is Wahshī." So he said: "A single person inviting towards Islam is more beloved to me than killing a thousand unbelievers." A narration of Tabarānī states: "Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: O Wahshī! Go and fight in the cause of Allāh taʿālā as you had been keeping people away from His path [before you embraced Islam]."

The above incident shows that cheerfulness or gladness is not essential for pardon.

The Essentials Of Hadrat Wālā's Methodology

An essential point of caution has to be mentioned with regard to Hadrat Wālā's method of rectification, viz. every person is not capable of adopting this special method. Therefore, ordinary reformers and rectifiers should never dare emulate it. If not, their blind emulation would cause harm to themselves and their disciples as well. This method is only for those very special personalities who have extricated themselves completely from selfishness and are able to safeguard the limits fully. This special capability cannot be acquired through mere emulation.

Hadrat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAttār *rahimahullāh* has the following to say with regard to the person who emulates another blindly:

> You are a slave of your self. O you heedless fellow! Do not humiliate yourself. Even if a man of the heart had to consume poison, it turns to honey.

Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* explains the above as follows:

> The people of the heart do not suffer any harm even if they have to consume poison.
>
> A person who acquires total health does not have to exercise any caution [as regards what he consumes]. Whereas a poor seeker, he only remains upright when he suffers from a fever.
>
> He brought out a pearl from the depths of the ocean. He derived benefits from losses.
>
> When a spiritual master picks up a lump of soil, it turns to gold. When a novice picks up gold, it turns to soil.
>
> When ignorance comes before him, it turns to knowledge. When knowledge comes to a novice, the knowledge is reduced to ignorance.
>
> When a novice touches an illness he becomes sick himself. But if a master had to take unbelief, it becomes a Muslim.

He says elsewhere:

> Do not apply the affairs of pure people to yourself even if the words *sher* - شير (lion) and *shīr* - شِير (milk) are written in the same way.
>
> Two bees suck from the same place, but a sting is produced from one and honey from the other.
>
> A monkey can imitate a human and do as he does. It sees man doing something and imitates him immediately.

It feels it was able to display the same actions to man. Where does it ever understand the difference between what is liked and what is disliked?

Hadrat Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* conveys the same theme as follows:

Every person who reddens his face does not necessarily know how to beautify himself. Every person who holds a looking glass does not necessarily know how to run a kingdom.

Every person who wears a crooked hat and sits up seriously does not necessarily know the principles of position and authority.

There are thousands of mysteries which are finer than hair. Every clean shaven person does not necessarily know the Qalandar way.

In short, any person wanting to emulate Hadrat Wālā in this regard should first develop the quality of self-criticism on account of which Hadrat Wālā – despite being qualified in every way – constantly reviews his methodology. Furthermore, the person must also check to see if he has the kindness, affection, consideration, mercy and sympathy like Hadrat Wālā's. It is because of these qualities that every decision of Hadrat Wālā proves to be beneficial and blessed for the respective person or persons. Instead of recoiling from him and disliking him, the hearts are even more attracted towards him, and the crowds of seekers are increasing by the day.

I just recalled Hadrat Wālā's statement in this regard. A Maulānā read the following verse in reference to Hadrat Wālā's methodology:

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

Had you been stern and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.

The Maulānā used this verse to show that Hadrat Wālā's methodology needs to be abandoned. Hadrat Wālā replied: "But this verse actually supports my methodology and shows that I am not stern and hard-hearted. Had I been such, people would have definitely dispersed from around me. But this is not the

case here. This shows that sternness and hard-heartedness are not found in me. This verse is therefore in my favour."

A Peculiar Benefit In Hadrat Wālā's Methodology

There are many other benefits in Hadrat Wālā's methodology. He says: "Had I adopted the general norms of character, there would have been such large crowds here that I would never have been able to render the Dīnī services which I did and which I am doing at present. In all the disorder and confusion [because of the large crowds], those who come here would not be able to derive any particular benefit from me. I would not have been able to differentiate the sincere ones from the insincere ones. It would have been just a hotchpotch of people. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* I have confidence in whoever I have at present because anyone and everyone cannot bear to remain with me."

A Unique Incident Portraying Diplomacy With Consideration

There are countless incidents which portray Hadrat Wālā's extreme level of consideration and safeguarding of limits. I will relate just two incidents and conclude this discussion which is becoming quite lengthy. I personally witnessed one of these incidents, and personally experienced the other.

On one occasion, a newly-arrived villager was severely reprimanded by Hadrat Wālā over some misdemeanour and asked to leave the assembly. The poor fellow thought that he was expelled so he began heading out of the Khānqāh. Hadrat Wālā scolded him again and said: "Where are you going? Why are you not going towards the musjid?"

I really admired Hadrat Wālā's affection at this point. Look at his consideration even when he was angry. He is scolding the person, asking him to get up, but still does not sever ties with him. He does not permit him to leave the Khānqāh. He personally stops him from leaving. However, he did all this without allowing himself to lose sight of his authority.

The second incident concerns myself. Because of some misdemeanour of mine, Hadrat Wālā scolded me in the assembly which is conducted after zuhr. After the ʿasr salāh, but before the worshippers could depart, Hadrat Wālā addressed me: "Khwājah Sāhib, I am going out into the fields for a walk. Will you join me?" I replied: "Indeed." Hadrat Wālā

remained sitting silently for some time. The worshippers too remained in their rows. Hadrat Wālā then got up and took me with him for a walk.

On the way, he explained the reason for this special treatment which he accorded to me. He said: "I had scolded you in front of all those people and it must have resulted in a drop in your status in their eyes. Taking you for a walk would make up for that." He then explained the reason for sitting for some time after asking me if I would join him for the walk. He said: "I only got up after my expression of special attention to you settled completely in the minds of all who were present. Had I got up immediately after saying it to you, they would neither have had an opportunity to think about it nor would it have had any effect on them."

Glory to Allāh! Look at his fine consideration to feelings. It certainly proves his expertise in the field of psychology.

Return To The Previous Subject

I had been describing Hadrat Wālā's arrival in a large assembly at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband and my own presence there. In the course of it, I touched on Hadrat Wālā's quality of awe and authority which I witnessed for the first time in this gathering. While mentioning this, I made reference to the awe and authority of a few personalities. This resulted in a lengthy discussion. Bearing in mind that it is a very important issue and people have many misunderstandings about it, I felt the need to discuss it from all angles.

I continued writing on this subject from the statements of Hadrat Wālā which I could recall easily and from his written works which were available to me. By the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, a huge treasure was compiled which I had never intended nor imagined. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Wālā's scholarly erudition and research acumen are well-known and accepted. No matter what issue he delves in – especially internal spiritual issues – he provides a comprehensive and absolute explanation without leaving out any of its different angles and without leaving room for anything more. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this treasure is therefore filled with many intricate points and facts, and is most sufficient and satisfying on this subject. It contains a reply to every doubt, a refutation of every objection, a remover

of every misunderstanding, and a rejection of every misgiving and doubt. Although this interjectory topic delayed the previous subject, all praise is due to Allāh, another important objective which is more in line with the present theme of spiritual teachings was realized.

My First Visit To Thānah Bhawan

I now return to the previous discussion on my attending the gathering in Deoband. I accompanied Hadrat Wālā to Thānah Bhawan at the end of this gathering. This was my first visit to Thānah Bhawan and my first opportunity of visiting Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Ashrafīyyah. It was a very strange, enjoyable and emotional sight for a person who had studied English, spent his life in colleges and looked at only one side of the picture.

The Scene In The Khānqāh

No matter who you look at, he appears to be a trustworthy person dressed in Islamic clothing. One is reciting the Qur'ān, another is performing salāh, another is occupied in dhikr, one is engrossed in meditation, another is conducting a lesson, one is writing a book while another is engrossed in studying books. As for the latter part of the night, it was a exceptional scene. One is gasping in the course of dhikr, another is crying, another is trembling, another is shaking his hands and feet in his earnestness, another is screaming out, one is reciting poetry with full emotion, another is crying and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā*. The beauty of it all is that in the darkness no one knows what the other is doing and what he is experiencing.

In short, each person was completely safe from ostentation and was opening his heart out to Allāh *taʿālā*. I too was seated in one corner and enjoying the collective spirit of this assembly of dhikr. I was hoping that Hadrat Wālā's attention will fall on a spiritless person like me and create emotions in me which are similar to those which are experienced by the others who were present there. I seemed to be saying:

> If only the one who brought the entire world to life
> with his single gaze were to glance at me as well.

The Effect Of The Khānqāh

In short, on reaching the Khānqāh, it seemed to me that I had entered another world which ought to be referred to as a

spiritual world. The beautiful cries of the dhikr of Allāh *taʿālā* were turning this heedless heart to one which remembers Allāh *taʿālā*.

> Whenever the heart hears the sound of "Allāh Allāh",
> it says "Allāh Allāh" from within the chest.

I recall the statement of an Ahl al-Hadīth friend who was also a spiritual man. He had accompanied me to the Khānqāh on one occasion. He said: "It is so lovely here. Whether you are sitting, standing, walking, sleeping, waking up – you hear the sounds of dhikr and recitation of the Qur'ān all the time and in all conditions. I go and lie down wherever I like, I listen to all the sounds, I thoroughly enjoy listening to them, and I also fall asleep in that condition. When I wake up, the same melodious sounds fill my ears. It is really lovely here."

The Assembly In The Khānqāh

Many people accompanied Hadrat Wālā to Thānah Bhawan after the gathering in Deoband. On seeing the large number of people in his assembly, Hadrat Wālā commented: "We seem to have a small gathering here as well." Because of the large number of guests and the shortage of space, I was made to share a room which was behind Hadrat Wālā's sitting place.

I was in the room reading *Munājāt Maqbūl* when Hadrat Wālā entered [the assembly area] and sat down. As was the norm, all the guests were informed of his arrival and told that they could go and sit near him if they wished. Everyone presented themselves, and both the porches were filled.

Hadrat Wālā's sitting place in those days was right next to the room in which I was housed. Since he had already arrived and taken his seat, I could not leave my room to attend the assembly. I remained in my room and continued reading *Munājāt Maqbūl*. Hadrat Wālā was inspiring all who were present with his words and statements with full fervour and passion. He seemed to be completely engrossed in the task at hand and seemed to be unmindful of everything else.

However, I was able to gauge some of the fire of genuine love which was filled in his heart and the permanent attachment which his pure heart had to the True Beloved when I experienced a sudden condition while sitting there. This is my personal feeling and is not a proof for others.

Details with regard to this condition are as follows: While he was speaking enthusiastically to all who were present, he was taking in breaths like a person normally takes when he is overwhelmed by a strange condition. While I was busy reading *Munājāt Maqbūl* in my room, my attention turned towards him and I immediately felt that each time Hadrat Wālā was breathing out, a type of fire was instantly filling in my chest and I was getting a burning sensation in my heart.

I am a sceptic by nature so I considered this feeling to be imaginary. But when I found myself experiencing it each time he breathed out, I was convinced that when Hadrat Wālā's internal fire of love [for Allāh] lights up more than normal, its physical heat is dispersed through his breathing. Now and again he breathed out in this manner a few times consecutively. When this happened, I would experience a lot of heat in my heart and felt as if the name of Allāh *taʿālā* was coming out with full force and vigour.

When I perceived this condition, I realized that this is a special time in which Allāh *taʿālā* was showering His special blessing on my heart via Hadrat Wālā. I therefore turned my attention totally to this condition and stopped reading *Munājāt Maqbūl*. The effect of this condition increased, I placed my elbows on the ground and a moaning sound emanated from me. But I restrained myself because Hadrat Wālā was sitting right outside the door. Despite this, some sounds did reach him. Much later he used to comment jokingly: "I was surprised at hearing those sounds and was wondering if some jinn had entered the room."

I would have lost control over myself at that time but fortunately for me, Hadrat Wālā asked the man who was fanning him to sit at my door because there was no other place for him to sit. I was able to control myself due to his presence. I did my utmost to control myself in order to conceal my condition. But my heart continually experienced that same condition. The assembly eventually ended after a long time and I left my room. Hadrat Wālā remarked in surprise: "Oh! You were sitting inside all this while! I was hearing some sounds but did not know that you were sitting inside. I was at a loss because I thought the room was empty and yet I was hearing sounds from inside! I thought a jinn must have come in!"

Hadrat Wālā's Spiritual Fire

Hadrat Wālā was experiencing an intense fire from within during those days, and the effect of it was displayed externally. I clearly remember sitting near Hadrat Wālā one day and felt as if I was sitting near an oven. This, despite the fact that a cold wind was blowing at the time. Perspiration was visible on his forehead and I also indicated to him that how is it that a cold wind is blowing yet he is feeling so hot!? Hadrat Wālā was taking deep breaths periodically and uttering the word "Allāh" from the depths of his heart. This was an indication of the internal fire which was within him. While moving about, he was saying "O my Master" in a strange tone of servitude. These two practices continue to this day.

Hadrat Wālā's Every Statement Is Applicable To Me

I experienced another strange condition during this first visit of mine. No matter what Hadrat Wālā was speaking about and no matter what incident he was relating – whether to do with this world or with Dīn – I found it totally applicable to my internal condition. The meanings of every part and how the applied to me would come automatically into my mind. I felt as if I was the focus of all his statements and anecdotes. It was as if Allāh *taʿālā* made Hadrat Wālā solely for my guidance.

For example, Hadrat Wālā was reciting the Qur'ān while taking his morning walk along the railway footpath. He had permitted me to accompany him. Along the way, we came across a few black buffaloes which were crossing the railway line. On seeing them he said: "Buffaloes are so ugly looking that if it was not for their milk, no one would have tolerated rearing them."

I am constantly inundated by whisperings and I thought that Hadrat Wālā was consoling me with regard to my whisperings. That even in this path [of Sufism], whisperings cross the path as these buffaloes crossed the railway line. The whisperings appear to be most abhorrent but they are tolerated because of their spiritual benefit. In short, I used to find some sort of personal relevance in every statement of Hadrat Wālā. No matter who he was addressing, I felt he was addressing me behind the veil of the person. As a saying goes:

> It is most wonderful when the secrets of the beloveds
> are related within the stories of other people.

I had become so convinced of this that I used to give the answers to some of these statements in those very references and pointers. And I was convinced that Hadrat Wālā understood my references.

Glad Tidings Of ʿIlm I'tibār

When I described my entire condition to Hadrat Wālā, he said: "I give you the glad tidings of ʿilm iʿtibār." He then explained the reality of ʿilm iʿtibār. He said: "When the mind goes from one thing to another because of a likeness between the two, it is known as ʿilm iʿtibār. It is also known as ʿilm taʿbīr. The person who has an inclination to this branch of knowledge is able to interpret dreams because in most cases, facts take on the forms of images in dreams." He then related the story of a pious elder. He said: "The man heard a cucumber seller shouting out: 'The best ten for one dāniq.[1]' On hearing the word best, then instead of thinking of the best cucumbers, it went to the other meaning of best, viz. best people [good people]. He then thought to himself that if this is the value of the best people in the sight of Allāh – i.e. ten of them in one dāniq – how low the value will be of evil people like us! Having said this, the elder screamed and fell unconscious." Hadrat Wālā continued: "The commentaries of the Qur'ān which are written by some Sufis are filled with expressions of this nature. For example, the cow which is mentioned in Sūrah al-Baqarah is taken to mean the self. The outrage which some ignorant Sufis committed is that they began considering this type of meanings to be the actual and essential meanings. This was a serious mistake on their part."

Consolation On The Disappearance Of ʿIlm I'tibār

I was overjoyed when I received the above glad tiding from Hadrat Wālā about being given ʿilm iʿtibār. But this condition disappeared after some time. When I expressed my remorse over its disappearance, Hadrat Wālā said: "Do not worry. Look, false flowers appear first on a tree. Those of them which establish themselves become true flowers from which fruits are born. There is nothing to be sorry about. Changes of this nature are inevitable in the path. ʿIlm iʿtibār is nothing. Allāh

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[1] An ancient coin equal to one sixth of a dirham.

willing, you will receive much greater treasures than it. Do not worry."

Cheerfulness At The Time Of Departure

After thoroughly enjoying the few days in Hadrat Wālā's blessed company, I went to bid him farewell. I raised my hand towards the top pocket of my waistcoat in order to take out some cash money and present it as a gift to him. The pocket was quite small, so it was difficult to take out the money and it took a bit long. Hadrat Wālā said jokingly: "If the money is not coming out, just remove your waistcoat and give the waistcoat to me. I will take the money out myself." This beautiful statement removed all the awe and contraction which I experienced towards Hadrat Wālā for the first time. I think Hadrat Wālā must have perceived my condition and said these words so that I may feel at ease when leaving. Hadrat Wālā was very vigilant in observing people's emotions. I noticed that most of the time when he bids farewell to anyone, he is extremely cheerful and jovial. Unless, off course, he was sending off someone because of the person's misdemeanours. In such a case, he would make it a point of reminding the person by saying: "You have disturbed me by your misdemeanours. You must remember this so that you do not do the same thing to someone else."

In my extreme love for Hadrat Wālā, I used to remain attached to him at all times – whether appropriate or not. I used to walk with him even when he was proceeding towards his house. He brought this to my attention on one occasion by saying: "There is a lot of extremism in you." I was overawed by this warning.

On my return home, I wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā in which I described his awe-inspiring nature. I wrote this letter in a uniquely loving tone. I am quoting an extract from it:

> On this occasion, I benefited from your attribute of beauty and quality of awe – both of which are solely for the training of the seekers. Apart from this, you nurtured me with absolute and total love and affection.
>
> You possess the attribute of beauty as well, and the quality of awe too. May I be sacrificed on your simplicity. May I be given over for your smartness.

> If I offended Hadrat Wālā by my audaciousness, please pardon me for Allāh's sake. Hadrat Wālā can be rest assured that this naivety and love was out of ignorance. Hadrat Wālā's affectionate words at the time of my departure had completely removed all the heaviness which I had been experiencing as a result of Hadrat Wālā's awe-inspiring nature. I can still perceive the joy which I experienced at that time. You made me extremely cheerful at the time of my departure. I still experience a special joy when I think of it now.

A Letter Describing My Condition In The Khānqāh

I also wrote a letter in which I described the condition which I had experienced while sitting in my room in the Khānqāh – which I had described in detail above. I wrote this letter after returning home from Thānah Bhawan. I did not have the courage to describe this condition verbally while I was there. In addition to describing this condition, I said to Hadrat Wālā: "It is so sorrowful that I do not even have the capability of expressing my spiritual ailments. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to enlighten Hadrat Wālā directly about my ailments so that Hadrat Wālā could rectify and treat them." Hadrat Wālā's reply to this letter was filled with emotion and feeling, leaving me in a state of ecstasy.

Hadrat Wālā's Reply

I clear remember the time when I received the letter. I was sitting with my cousin and having a meal. The moment I saw the letter, the condition which had enveloped me in Thānah Bhawan returned once again. The condition regarding whose disappearance I had expressed my remorse and for which I had requested Hadrat Wālā's attention came to me once again. I had composed the following couplet in my letter to Hadrat Wālā:

> Please cast your gaze of attention on me once again.
> Fill my chest with the fire of love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is exactly what happened. No sooner I set eyes on Hadrat Wālā's reply, the burning sensation in my chest came back to me. Once I started reading the letter, that condition filled and enveloped me to such an extent that I stopped eating and

proceeded upstairs, while at the same time asking my cousin not to come up. Once I reached upstairs, I lied down on a bedstead and trembled continuously. I read this enjoyable letter so many times and read it to so many people that I memorized a major portion of it. I remember it to this day although more then twenty five years have passed and the original letter is lost, although portions of my letter which I had written to Hadrat Wālā is still preserved. Hadrat Wālā's letter is filled with themes of enthusiasm and yearning [for Allāh *ta'ālā*]. Anyone who heard it was reduced to trembling. Even now, when I read it to anyone, the person is completely overtaken. This is especially so when it is compared to Hadrat Wālā's current replies.

The fact of the matter is that in those days Hadrat Wālā was overcome and overwhelmed by emotions and feelings of love, while now he is characterized by wisdom and sagacity. The latter qualities are more beneficial and more perfect. When I read this reply to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion, he said: "I myself was very restless in those days. Now I have become absolutely dry and indifferent." He then explained it with the following example: In some seasons people eat less broth and more chutney. This is especially so during the summer and windy seasons. On the other hand, people eat more broth in winter and less chutney. They will eat chutney occasionally – taking a few licks only. They do this although the broth is dry compared to it. However, the broth makes up more of the body while the chutney is just one or two licks."

Hadrat Wālā explained the same theme in a different way on another occasion. I was with him when he was reciting the Qur'ān during his morning walk. We came across two orchards on the way. One was fully matured while the other was still flowering. The one that was matured appeared dry, while the other was green, lush and appealing. Hadrat Wālā immediately remarked: "This is the difference between the average person and the one who has reached the end. Although the green and lush orchard appears attractive, it is of no use apart from cutting it and feeding it to the oxen and becoming fodder for the animals. Although the other one appears totally dry, pale and tasteless, it has seeded, matured, become dry and is ready for harvesting. You can harvest it at will and obtain the grain from it – grain which is a source of life for man and the actual purpose of the farm."

Anyway, those early days were Hadrat Wālā's days of enthusiasm and fervour. This is why his replies of those days were very colourful and fervent. His reply to my letter follows:

"I received your letter and read every word. I enjoyed it thoroughly. If I enjoyed it so much, the writer must have enjoyed it even more when he was writing it.

O you cup-bearer! What must have been your condition when you yourself were the one who filled this cup!

All these changes are the results of love for which I congratulate you. Allāh willing,

> May these conditions remain eternal so that the affections of the man of Allāh may remain with you.

Do not pay attention to futile worries.

> I will bear your worries, there is no need for you to worry. I am more affectionate to you than a hundred fathers.

Sometimes, when a seeker sets his focus, his heart attaches itself to the shaykh, and the conditions of the shaykh's heart are transferred to his heart. The story which you related is of the same kind."

My Thoughts About My Condition And Hadrat Wālā's Reply

Hadrat Wālā's above explanation affirms what I had thought, i.e. the effects which I was experiencing were reflections of his spiritual conditions. The couplet which Hadrat Wālā quoted in his letter left me in a state of ecstasy for several days. It prompted me to compose a few lines myself. I remember the following two couplets to this day:

> O Allāh! What intense fire must be burning in that heart whose sighs ignited thousands of other hearts.

> A person will receive whatever comfort he desires in Paradise. All that we desire is intensely mad love [for Allāh *ta'ālā*].

The pining and burning love of those days was so beloved that when I experienced tranquillity on some occasions, I would think to myself that it must not happen that I reach the Beloved too quickly or else the joy of this pining love will come to an end. I did not know at the time:

> O brother! This is an extremely high court. No matter which level you reach, you cannot reach the top.
>
> The path of love never ends by running because the more of the path you cross, the more it expands. Like a branch – it grows more when it is pruned.

I was in the habit of relating all my thoughts and whisperings to Hadrat Wālā with a view to rectification. This was also Hadrat Wālā's habit with his shaykh, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, as related to us by Hadrat Wālā himself. Thus, I also related my present thoughts to him. Hadrat Wālā laughed and said: "You have a unique temperament. This thought stemmed from the joy of yearning and not – Allāh forbid – from turning away. As stated by a person who was in a state of ecstasy:

> I will not sell the joy of your pain in return for a cure."

Moreover, since it was merely a whispering, Hadrat Wālā did not express any disapproval but astonishment.

Yearning To Go To Thānah Bhawan

After my first visit to Thānah Bhawan my desire to go back intensified. In the first letter which I wrote to Hadrat Wālā after returning home – the latter part of which I still have in my possession – I also wrote: "My heart is yearning to visit Hadrat Wālā and Thānah Bhawan. I cannot seem to be satisfied. May Allāh *taʿālā* materialize my wish very quickly. Āmīn." Whenever I got a holiday, even if it was for just two days, I would go with genuine enthusiasm. In fact, most of the time, I used to go when I used to get off in the last Saturday and Sunday of the month. I would travel from a distant place like Fatahpūr and present myself before Hadrat Wālā but would hardly get twelve hours to spend in his blessed company. I would also spend a lot of money for the journey.

Many Blessings Despite A Short Stay

On one of those short visits, Hadrat Wālā attended a graduation ceremony in Sahāranpūr while he was a bit ill. I spent just five hours with him because I had leave for just one day, i.e. Sunday. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I benefited

tremendously from this short visit. I clearly remember experiencing a feeling of presence with Allāh *taʿālā* for the first time during this visit. This was a result of Hadrat Wālā's special focus and attention because he was extremely impressed by my long journey for such a short stay. I used to experience such effects of Hadrat Wālā's focus and attention during every visit of mine that I used to say that even if I had to spend fifty rupees for the journey and I am able to merely set my gaze on him and he looks at me, then I will not bother in the least about the fifty rupees for that one look. In fact, I would consider it to be a boon. As a poet says:

> O you for whose single glance many glances can be sacrificed. O you for whose single gaze loads of this world can be sacrificed.
>
> I just gave a few stones and purchased a life. All thanks are due to Allāh, this was a real bargain.

Forcing Myself To Visit Hadrat Wālā

I constantly heard Hadrat Wālā speaking about the benefits of the companionship of a shaykh. So even when I did not feel like, I would, as per the teaching of Hadrat Wālā, impose upon my self to go and visit him. I would purchase a ticket and force myself onto a train. I would then say to my self: When you rationally see the benefit of it, there is no need to procrastinate and hesitate. It is in my power to buy the ticket and it is in my power to sit on the train. Now whether my self likes it or not, I am going.

I used to take lengthy unpaid leaves or half-paid leaves in order to present myself at the Khānqāh. If I ever experienced a lack of interest in going either because of a natural hesitation or worldly occupations, I used to read the following couplet of Mīr Mīnā'ī Marhūm:

> O Amīr! The fear of the heart produces thousands of excuses for not going. It says: I will neither go towards the desert nor to the garden.

Travelling With Hadrat Wālā

I also accompanied Hadrat Wālā on lengthy journeys. In addition to the desire in my heart to accompany him, I had heard him saying that if a seeker gets an opportunity, he must

accompany his shaykh on a journey because he is able to get closer to the shaykh and faces various types of situations. This opens the hearts, joins them and creates mutual affinity. And benefiting from one's shaykh is dependent on affinity. Another benefit is that a journey helps one on the path to rectification because the shaykh is able to observe different types of situations and interactions of the seeker for which he can correct and reprimand him. Such opportunities are almost impossible when at home. In the same way, the seeker can learn certain lessons from the shaykh's interactions which he would not have learnt had he not been on a journey with him.

A Few Admonitory Lessons

In addition to journeying with Hadrat Wālā being very enjoyable, it was also very beneficial. First of all, his every situation was admonitory, and he himself would scold and reprimand whenever the situation demanded. A few details in this regard were given in the chapter on his travels and journeys. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, during this 28-year relationship with Hadrat Wālā, I had the opportunity of observing thousands of admonitory and pleasant incidents and interactions, and listening to countless statements, instructions and words of advice. It is beyond me to encompass them all. As for the effects and impressions which they had on my heart, those can never be described. I wrote a couplet in this regard:

> The tongue has no heart and the heart has no tongue. O what can I do? How can I explain what goes through my heart?

Anyway, a few incidents were related above. I will now relate a few miscellaneous incidents, statements and writings which come to my mind and without any consideration as to whether I quoted them in any of my other writings or not.

First Story: A Maulānā's Error Is Rectified

A Maulānā who was staying in the Khānqāh posted a letter to one of his friends in which he described his own spiritual conditions. He added in his letter: "I am acquiring such and such blessings here. You should also come here and acquire them." Hadrat Wālā came to know about it. He was most concerned about removing the evils of the self from the seekers

and considered it essential to give more importance to rectification of the self than to different forms of dhikr. This is why he turned his attention to his rectification. Incidentally, the Maulānā passed by Hadrat Wālā after the zuhr salāh. So Hadrat Wālā cautioned him silently by saying: "Did you not feel ashamed of exposing your spiritual conditions which are really secrets? Exposing them to others is also a type of claim." This caution of Hadrat Wālā was on the surface. Then after the ʿasr salāh, the Maulānā tried to give Hadrat Wālā a note with a view to describing his condition. Hadrat Wālā brushed him aside with an angry tone, refused to take the note from him and said: "Janāb, Māshā Allāh, you have become perfect. I am not qualified to rectify those who are perfect. You may now go somewhere else because I cannot undertake your rectification." Hadrat Wālā then instructed for the Maulānā's possessions to be removed from the Khānqāh, had them placed outside, and issued an order for him to leave. The Maulānā began weeping bitterly but Hadrat Wālā, despite being very soft-hearted, never – as per his own words – allowed his emotions to overpower his mind. So despite the Maulānā's crying, begging and beseeching, the order of his expulsion – which was based on nothing but wisdom – was not changed.

This incident occurred immediately after the ʿasr salāh so all the worshippers were still sitting in their rows in the musjid. I was also present. Hadrat Wālā remained seated, and delivered a fervent lecture on the subject of servitude and self-obliteration being the essential objectives. All the worshippers were in a trance-like silence. I became so conscious of my uselessness and worthlessness that I moved a bit back from the row out of shame. On looking at my own filthy condition, I did not consider myself worthy of sitting in the row of righteous and pious people.

In the course of his lecture, Hadrat Wālā said that people consider divine exposition to be something very great whereas it is nothing because it has no influence on one's proximity with Allāh *taʿālā*. Some people have a natural affinity with divine exposition while others do not, just as how some people are born short-sighted while others are far-sighted. He then pointed towards the ablution area of the musjid and said: "Imagine a person who can only see as far as the ablution area, while another can see beyond, as far as the street outside. Is the one who can see as far as the street closer to Allāh *taʿālā*?

This is merely a type of sight and has nothing to do with proximity. In the same way, dispositions are different. Some people have no affinity whatsoever with divine exposition. They can engage in thousands of spiritual exercises but never experience any divine exposition. What does divine exposition have to do with piety? The essential thing is servitude. By Allāh, if a person experiences a million divine expositions and then evaluates his emotions, he will realize that his proximity has not progressed in the least. On the other hand, if he were to say *Sub-hānallāh* a few times and checks his emotions, he will clearly perceive some sort of progress in his proximity with Allāh *taʿālā*. Try this out anytime you like and you will experience it for yourself."

Hadrat Wālā continued speaking on the subject of servitude for quite some time.

A special effect which his talk had on me was that many of the whisperings which had caused me considerable stress and worry were removed completely to the extent that they would not come to me even if I thought about them. I was totally overjoyed over my recovery from this illness – like a person who is given life after having lost hope in it or given the treasure of īmān all over again. I would have been prepared to give away an entire kingdom just to acquire this treasure.

I referred to whisperings as an illness metaphorically because Hadrat Wālā does not even consider an inundation of whisperings to be an illness. This is because a spiritual illness is only considered to be one when it causes Dīnī harm. And whisperings have absolutely no Dīnī harm as per the explicit text:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Allāh does not impose on a self anything which it cannot bear.

In fact, if anyone complains to Hadrat Wālā about an inundation of whisperings or mere inclination towards sin without acting and resolving to do it, then the first question he asks him is: "What is the Dīnī harm in it?"

Anyway, I was overjoyed over the removal of my lengthy complaint about whisperings. When Hadrat Wālā completed his talk and was leaving, I expressed the effect it had on me. He replied in a happy tone: "Yes, it was indeed a beneficial

lecture.” Hadrat Wālā left, but the effect which his lecture had on my condition remained. After the maghrib salāh, I was sitting alone on Hadrat Wālā’s porch and was in a sort of ecstasy over the condition which I was experiencing. I was repeating the following couplet from Hadrat Hājī Sāhib’s *Munājāt*:

> O Allāh! Make me unmindful of everything else. O Allāh! Make me mindful of none except You.

Subsequently I was so overpowered by Allāh’s presence that the joy of it left me self-obliterated and even caused me to lose control over my hands and feet. When this condition increased considerably, I spontaneously thought of going and presenting myself before Hadrat Wālā. I got up immediately and proceeded towards his house. Since I had lost control over my hands and feet, I had to proceed breathlessly, taking support from the walls, and eventually reached his house. Hadrat Wālā’s attendant, Bhāi Nayāz Khān, saw my condition and became worried. He asked me if I was okay. I replied with a sigh: “Bhāi, go and call Hadrat Wālā.”

Hadrat Wālā was inside. The attendant informed him immediately. Incidentally, Hadrat Wālā had just finished relieving himself. He became worried when he heard about my condition, came out immediately and asked: “Are you okay? How are you?” I fell at his feet the moment I saw him and said: “Hadrat conferred me with a great treasure today.” I shed tears of happiness and repeatedly said to him – as though I was a madman – “Hadrat, you did a great favour to me today. You gave me freedom from a serious ailment. You conferred a great treasure to me.” I was neither fully conscious at the time nor fully unconscious; it was an in-between feeling.

Hadrat Wālā’s one hand was empty. He lifted me up and, with the help of Bhāi Nayāz Khān, took me inside and made me lie on a nearby bedstead. He placed his blessed hand on my chest and repeatedly said: “Take control of yourself.” Since I was still not fully conscious, I remained on the bedstead and began wiping my tears of joy with Hadrat Wālā’s hands. I said without reservation: “I am sure Hadrat Wālā too must be very pleased with my condition.” He replied happily: “Indeed. Why not? I am happy with the good conditions of all my associates.” He added: “The Sufis refer to this condition as expansion and affability. It is the opposite of retraction and fear. All praise is due to Allāh

taʿālā, such conditions which take several years to achieve in other places are achieved within a few weeks with Hadrat Hājī Sāhib by Allāh's grace."

This demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's extreme respect, confidence, indebtedness and fulfilment of the right of love in the sense that he attributes all his excellences and achievements to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He says with full confidence: "I know my own condition very well. After all, even before I presented myself before Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, I was occupied in acquiring knowledge and teaching. But those points only started to come to my mind after remaining with him. I had never thought of them or dreamt of them before that. So if these are not the blessings of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, who else's can they be?"

I recall another very beneficial statement of Hadrat Wālā in this regard. He said: "Even after reaching perfection, the prerequisite for the continuation of blessings is to maintain one's contact of faith and indebtedness to one's shaykh for the rest of one's life. Yes, after reaching perfection, the need for further education [in this field] does not remain."

I now return to my story. When I recovered slightly from my condition through Hadrat Wālā's focus and I felt some peace, I got up and sat up respectfully. Hadrat Wālā then proceeded inside.

I was Hadrat Wālā's guest and so was another person. A rice dish was sent for us from inside. Although I had recovered from my condition, I was not fully stable as yet. I clearly remember not making small bite-size portions when eating the rice. Instead, I was taking hands-full of it, playing with it, and laughing loudly like a madman. The other guest was not aware of my actual internal condition so he began objecting to my behaviour. Bhāi Nayāz informed him that I should be excused for now because I was not my normal self. The following couplets come to mind:

> If we are devoid of all possessions and mad, it is because of the measure of the intoxication of the cup-bearer.
>
> Do not rebuke the astonished and confused fakir because he has some other motive for which he is striking his hands and legs.

The above was a description of my own condition. Now listen to the story of the Maulānā on account of whom I had the opportunity of listening to Hadrat Wālā's fervent and impressive lecture, and reduced me to lose control of my self.

Hadrat Wālā expelled him from the Khānqāh so that it may serve as a warning to him. He proceeded to a musjid and remained there. He bore severe worry and stress for a few days, repented to Allāh *taʿālā*, sought His forgiveness, cried before Him, and then sent a note to Hadrat Wālā via another person asking him to pardon him. Since he was disciplined sufficiently and his pride and arrogance had vanished completely – as perceived by Hadrat Wālā – Hadrat Wālā pardoned him and wrote to him: "I do not find any displeasure towards you in my heart. This is a sentimental sign of the acceptance of your repentance. You are permitted to return to the Khānqāh."

He returned to the Khānqāh and occupied himself in dhikr and other spiritual practices. This Maulānā had pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and when the latter passed away, requested Hadrat Wālā to accept him for rectification. He personally related to me: "I acquired many benefits in those few days." By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he departed having received khilāfah from Hadrat Wālā, proceeded to Bengal where a large number of people benefited from him. He passed away quite some time ago. May Allāh *taʿālā* pardon him and confer him with the highest ranks in Paradise. Āmīn.

I observed this on countless occasions, and also made reference to it previously, that Hadrat Wālā's disciplining had the quality of cleaning and purging, resulting in complete and total cleansing. His disciplining is a manifestation of the verse

عَسٰى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

Perhaps you dislike a thing while it is best for you.[1]

A seeker only realizes this later on when he witnesses the benefits of it.

Note: This entire story demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's level of instruction and power of benefiting.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 216.

Second Story: A Couplet Has An Effect On Me

Hadrat Wālā was waiting at the Thānah Bhawan railway station for a train. I was with him because I intended travelling with. As was his habit, he reached the station before the expected arrival of the train. He had to wait for quite some time. As usual, many people came to bid him farewell. So he was occupying them with his words of wisdom.

He spoke about a Qārī who was a teacher in Hadrat Wālā's Madrasah. Hadrat Wālā said: "He was in the habit of walking around in the Madrasah with a stick on his shoulder while wearing a pants which reached midway to his calves. When I saw him in that condition one day, I said to him: Qārī Sāhib! You should also sing this couplet while you are walking around in this way:

> Nowadays, those who are madly in love with you are
> in a fervent state of madness.

I do not know with what emotion Hadrat Wālā related this story because it created a type of madness within me. I needed water at the time. I took a water can and proceeded to obtain some water. As I was walking, I was singing the above couplet and thoroughly enjoying myself. I continued singing it even on my return.

I was completely overcome, I lost control over my limbs and was on the verge of falling when my eyes fell on Hadrat Wālā,. I became very worried because if I were to fall in front of all these people I would become a laughing stock. I did my utmost to control myself until the train arrived and sat down in a coach together with Hadrat Wālā and his companions. Janāb Hāfiz ʿAbd al-Latīf Sāhib, the principal of Mazāhir al-ʿUlūm Sahāranpūr, and Janāb Hāfiz ʿAbd al-Majīd Sāhib Thānwī also accompanied us. I was seated next to the Principal Sāhib. I was still overcome by my spiritual condition while sitting in the train. I remember that while I was sitting, I was loosing control over myself and falling repeatedly on the Principal Sāhib. I feared what people will say if this condition worsened. When it did not stop, I took out a used envelope from my pocket, tore one side of it, wrote the following couplet on the reverse blank side, and gave it to Hadrat Wālā.

> O people of the heart! My heart is slipping from my hands. For Allāh's sake, do not let this pain which is still a secret to become exposed.

Since this couplet clearly portrayed my condition at the time, Hadrat Wālā was very impressed by it and said: "I will make it into an amulet for myself." Instead of being comforted by these beautiful words from him, my condition intensified.

After a short while, Hadrat Wālā said to Hāfiz ʿAbd al-Majīd Sāhib: "Hāfizjī, give me a pencil so that I could write a response to Khwājah Sāhib's note." He took a pencil from Hāfizjī and wrote the following couplet under my couplet:

> Although we may be defamed before the intelligent ones, we do not desire popularity and fame.

He then returned my note to me. I was astonished because I had feared defamation and being mocked at, and Hadrat Wālā wrote about the same thing in his couplet. It seemed as though my entire condition was exposed to him. Through Hadrat Wālā's focus and his looking at me repeatedly, the effects of that condition subsided – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: This story also portrays Hadrat Wālā's power of influence and his overwhelming enthusiasm and yearning of those days.

Third Story: Consolation From Hadrat Wālā's Statements

1. Hadrat Wālā provides solace and consolation to a seeker in a most appealing and satisfying manner causing the seeker to regain his confidence at the exact time of despair. Hadrat Wālā's consolation is not confined to words. Rather, when he provides solace to a person or gives him glad tidings either verbally or in writing, he perceives it within himself the moment the addressee hears or sees it. The immense consolation which seekers experience with Hadrat Wālā is acknowledged by all – his friends, enemies, associate and non-associates. Just recently, a shaykh belonging to our spiritual lineage conveyed his problems to another shaykh also belonging to our spiritual lineage. Although the latter shaykh had severe differences with Hadrat Wālā on certain issues, he said to the one who sought his help: "The solution to your problems can only be found in Thānah Bhawan."

As the saying goes:

الفضل ما شهدت به الأعداء

Virtue is what enemies testify to.

2. Not long ago, a murīd of another shaykh wrote a letter to Hadrat Wālā in which he said: "I need your permission to describe my conditions to Hadrat Wālā because I experienced a lot of solace from reading your lectures. This is especially so with regard to whisperings – I can repulse them only when I think of Hadrat Wālā." He added: "Although I have confidence in my own shaykh, my confidence in Hadrat Wālā is more." He also wrote: "The cause of my distress is that I hastened in pledging bayʿah."

Hadrat Wālā said: "Look, these are the consequences of hastiness in pledging bayʿah. I prohibit hastiness in pledging bayʿah and constantly defer it for the same reason."

3. Hadrat Wālā often receives letters of this nature from the murīds of other shaykhs. Hadrat Wālā used to permit them to write on condition they do not harbour any evil thoughts about their shaykhs and they write to him solely for the sake of learning.

4. A student of Western knowledge suddenly experienced a yearning for Allāh *taʿālā*. He gave up his studies and went out in search of a shaykh. Incidentally, there was a bidʿatī shaykh who lived nearby and was quite well-known. The student went and asked him for his advice. Look at the greatness of Allāh *taʿālā*! Although this shaykh belonged to a different creed, he advised the student to go to Hadrat Wālā. However, Hadrat Wālā advised him to go to Deoband to further his studies and to pledge bayʿah to Hadrat Maulānā Deobandī *rahimahullāh* because it would be easier for him there. The student followed Hadrat Wālā's advice.

Note: Names have been intentionally left out in the above stories so that no one is offended. This is the case with most stories in this biography.

My own stories in this regard

I now present some of my own stories on this subject of consolation. They have all been included under the heading, "Third Story" because they contain the same theme.

An example of changing conditions: I said to Hadrat Wālā with extreme remorse: "Hadrat, whatever internal purification I acquire from your blessed company is gradually washed away when I become engrossed in the evil affairs of this world." He replied in a very comforting and consoling tone: "It is not so serious. When you dirty your clothes, the washer-man washes them for you. You dirty them again and he washes them again."

Chronic fever and internal affinity: I said to him on one occasion: "Hadrat, you get an ordinary illness like a cough, cold and winter flu. Another is a chronic fever. I am suffering from a chronic fever, so I am in real need." He replied: "Congratulations. This is a sign of internal affinity [with Allāh *taʿālā*] because, like a chronic fever, internal affinity spreads throughout the body through all the veins and is never removed." What he meant was: How do you know that what you consider to be an illness is really an illness? You see a few combined effects of an illness while the condition is really good.

A real heart: "I said: Hadrat, my heart has a strange unsteadiness." He replied: "You have a real heart because the meaning of a heart (*qalb*) is that it does not remain constant in one condition. It is always turning around."

Confusion and disentanglement: I wrote to Hadrat Wālā about one of my spiritual worries. I referred to it as follows: "I am in severe confusion." He replied: "Confusion is a prelude to disentanglement." The Qur'ān says:

اِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Surely with difficulty there is ease.[1]

5. I had written a letter to Hadrat Wālā in which I described my external and internal worries. He replied: "Allāh willing, you will acquire success in both worlds. My heart testifies to this."

6. I wrote a letter to him in which I described my many conditions. I also wrote: "I am so desirous of speaking about Hadrat Wālā that sometimes I mention my private conditions to others, whereas, it is forbidden for a novice to reveal his secrets

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[1] Sūrah al-Inshirāh, 94: 6.

because of the harms which this entails." He replied: "All your conditions are praiseworthy. The only thing which remains is that unsteadiness has to be changed to steadiness. Allāh willing, this will also be realized. There is so much of motion in a boiling cauldron. This is a sign that it is moving forward [the food is getting ready]. Then see how everything subsides and becomes calm. This is the steadiness which I am referring to."

There is no harm in merely singing in solitude as described by yourself.

Exposing your condition to any unknowing person is not blameworthy because it is not intentional.

7. I wrote a letter in which I complained about my failure to take control of my time. Hadrat Wālā replied: "I give you the glad tidings of success despite your present condition. Allāh willing, you will never be deprived. This is the proof for what I am saying:

> Keep yourself occupied in correcting yourself while you are on this path. Do not remain free for a single moment until the very end.
>
> Striving has to continue until your last breath so that the favours of a spiritual master may continue falling on you.
>
> Do not go down the alley of despair because there are still very big hopes. Do not go towards darkness because there are many suns.

Wastage and submission: In one of my letters to Hadrat Wālā, I complained that I had made a firm resolution to take full control over how I spent my time but I could not keep it up. He replied: "In this wastage of time the issue of following one's destiny is at least solved. It shows that man is helpless before divine decree. You had resolved to control your time but you ended up wasting it. Allāh willing, the exposition of this issue will also be a step to progress."

Note: The full reply to this letter was quoted in the section where I had related incidents regarding my bay'ah.

The door to the reality: I wrote in one of my letters: "By the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā*, during my last visit I experienced a peculiar condition which I had never experienced before.

Unfortunately, after I returned home, that condition waned gradually and eventually disappeared completely." Hadrat Wālā wrote a very fine point which always proved to be a guiding lamp for me. If the seekers bear it in mind, they will never be stressed by the ups and downs of the path.

He wrote: "To experience a condition and then to realize its disappearance is also a boon. The things which remain forever are one's intellect and īmān. Everything else comes and goes."

I benefited tremendously from this reply and it seemed to me as if the door to the reality was opened to me.

Do not go towards despair: I was very stressed over an inundation of whisperings. This even caused me to doubt my own īmān. I became terrified and wrote a letter in which I described all my whisperings and fears. I added: "In such a situation, I now leave it to Hadrat Wālā to tell me whether I have īmān or – Allāh forbid – I am deprived of it. However, bear in mind that the answer will be from a Mujaddid and a lighthouse of instruction. If I lose hope in him, I am destroyed. I took a lot of courage and asked this question after placing my trust in Allāh *taʿālā*. I hope for the best from Him."

Hadrat Wālā gave me the glad tidings of īmān and wrote this couplet:

> Do not go down the alley of despair because there are still very big hopes. Do not go towards darkness because there are many suns.

I also added the following in my letter: "If Hadrat Wālā were to abandon me after learning of my terrible condition and shifted his gaze of attention from me, there can be nothing but the Hell-fire for me." Hadrat Wālā wrote: "Allāh forbid, why should I turn my attention away?" He then quoted the following couplet:

> I am the slave of the owner of the tavern. His kindness is directed towards me all the time. A pious and righteous person shows his kindness sometimes, and does not at other times.

The capital of consolation: On one occasion, I felt very sad when I was departing from his company. So he said to me in a most affectionate tone: "There is no need to feel sad because, Allāh willing, the capital of consolation is with you all the time. That is, your bond with Allāh *taʿālā*."

I have come to obliterate myself: I took a long leave from my job and presented myself at the Khānqāh for the sake of rectification. The moment I arrived, I wrote a couplet which I had composed and presented it to Hadrat Wālā:

> I have come to your threshold with no other desire apart from asking you to obliterate me. I have come here to obliterate myself.

He replied immediately with a tone of full confidence: "Allāh willing, that is exactly what will happen."

A solution to all problems: I noted many of my spiritual maladies, expressed my despair at being able to realize my rectification, and presented the letter to Hadrat Wālā.

I added: "How can I be rid off so many illnesses?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is not difficult at all. Just adhere to two things, awareness and courage.

Glory to Allāh! Glory to Allāh! What a concise and effective formula which encompasses all definitions. This is a general point which embraces all the finer details of rectification. I was overcome by a unique condition when I read this reply. I experienced such a deluge of themes and ideas from these two points that if I had sat down at that time to write on them, I would have compiled a book. I even intended to write on them but my laziness did not permit me to proceed. I then forgot all those themes and ideas. However, in order to remember this formula easily, I preserved it in a couplet which I remember to this day:

> The formula of awareness and courage which Hadrat taught me is an elixir for the rectification of the Muslim nation.

Indeed, if a person is aware of his faults and takes courage when the time demands it, he will never commit a sin. Hadrat Wālā said with regard to courage: "If courage is not followed by success, it is not even considered to be courage. It is merely an intention of courage."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a valuable explanation of courage. It ought to be borne in mind at all times.

Past and future mistakes are pardoned: I am quite disorganized and unsystematic while Hadrat Wālā is extremely

organized and systematic. I caused a lot of inconvenience to him in the past and I still do. I asked him to excuse me and pardon me on one occasion. He replied spontaneously with genuine affection: "All past and future mistakes are pardoned. There is no need to worry." He then read this verse:

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ

So that Allāh may forgive you your past and future sins.[1]

I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to bless me with sound understanding and inspire me with correct etiquette so that I never inconvenience Hadrat Wālā. Āmīn.

A Few Incidents Of Seekers With Regard To Consolation

Mercy and joy

A person wrote: "By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I am carrying out my spiritual practices but I am not experiencing any joy in my heart." Hadrat Wālā replied: "All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* you are at least experiencing mercy, even though you are not experiencing joy. Joy (*farhat*) is merely His slave-girl. Allāh willing, she too will present herself when the time comes."

By the blessings of Hadrat Wālā, the person's mood opened up completely through this fine and heartening reply. He wrote back to Hadrat Wālā saying: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā's prayers, that slave-girl too presented herself."

The man's father was a chief officer of Kadūrah. He was a poet and a man of letters. He greatly admired Hadrat Wālā's reply and was astonished at how Hadrat Wālā knew these expressions of the Nawābs and Begums. The word *farhat* is generally the name of slave-girls who are allotted specific turns. I used to read Hadrat Wālā's published lectures to the father. He said to me: "The Maulānā [Hadrat Wālā] writes poetry in the form of prose."

Permissible thoughts

I was speaking to Hadrat Wālā about his excellent manner of instruction and consolation and I related to him my mother's story. My mother complained about various useless thoughts

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[1] Sūrah al-Fath, 48: 2.

inundating her while she is engaged in dhikr. So much so, she starts thinking about incidents which took place in her childhood. When I had conveyed my mother's complaint to Hadrat Wālā, he said: "She must not worry about such thoughts. In fact, she should consider lawful thoughts to be a boon [at least she is not having evil thoughts] because they come as barriers to evil thoughts. If the heart is emptied completely of lawful thoughts, evil thought begin to enter it. Once Allāh *taʿālā* blesses you with overwhelming dhikr, these lawful thoughts will also leave you.

The benefit of consolation

After I related the above incident to Hadrat Wālā, he said: "What I say about permissible thoughts or whisperings is based on my own past experiences. I do not say it as a proof but rather explain my own observations because I myself went through all these conditions. Had I said these things solely on academic grounds, the person/s would never have been consoled. I bore many troubles at that time but I now express my gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* for having enabled me to cross all obstacles."

Hadrat Wālā continues: "A person went to one of my enemies for advice on spiritual matters. My enemy mentioned me by name and said to the person: 'If you want real consolation, then go to him. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred him with special expertise in giving solace and consolation. But if you want to merely establish facts, you may go anywhere you like.'"

Hadrat Wālā added: "All this is from the colour of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. I have not come across greater consolation than from him. The extent to which Sufism can be traversed through him cannot be achieved from anyone else. The reason for this is that a bond of love for Allāh *taʿālā* is created through him; and love is the shortest path to Him. This is why I pay particular attention to creating love for Allāh *taʿālā* in the hearts of the seekers."

Satan cannot harm the friends of Allāh

A person was severely distressed by whisperings. After writing at length on matters which would give solace to him, Hadrat Wālā concluded by saying: "Brother! If a person has Allāh over his head, he can have no worry whatsoever. What harm can Satan do to him!?" Allāh *taʿālā* Himself says:

اِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ لَهٗ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ

He has no authority over those who are believers and they place their trust in their Sustainer.[1]

There was a sincere and religious person who had pledged allegiance to Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He wrote a long letter to Hadrat Wālā in which he mentioned having whisperings of evil thoughts against some of the 'ulamā' and committee members of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband because of some rivalry and friction which was taking place there at the time. The person wrote: "I have full confidence and faith in them especially because they are of the Deobandī creed and part of the Imdādīyyah spiritual family. This is why I cannot have any evil thoughts about any of them. Although I have no qualification whatsoever to interfere with regard to the opinions of these elders of Dīn, I find it difficult to move away from the defective thoughts which I am having. I am very troubled and confused over this issue. Please provide solace to me."

Hadrat Wālā wrote a short but very concise and convincing reply to him. He wrote:

> You strove a lot to set right your Dīnī matters. Allāh willing, you will be rewarded for it. The needs of each patient are different. The prescription which will be most beneficial to you is this:
>
> Do your own work, don't be concerned about others.
>
> Remain silent with your tongue, pen and heart. Be patient over your distress. Neither have faith in anyone nor evil thoughts about anyone because both are harmful. You will not even be questioned about it on the day of Resurrection.
>
> Was salām

A fear and a drop

A person who was overcome by fear wrote: "I am in extreme fear." Hadrat Wālā replied: "Fear is a drop in the ocean of

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 99.

cognition. May Allāh *taʿālā* increase it and turn it into an ocean."

Waves of the sea of love

A person wrote: "Sometimes I experience retraction and at other times expansion. Sometimes I am sad and sometimes happy."

The letter was quite long but Hadrat Wālā wrote a short reply in one corner. I can say without exaggeration that he encapsulated an ocean in one drop. He wrote: "Your entire condition deserves gratitude. Every part of it are waves of the sea of love. The motion of the sea is splendid and its calmness too is a source of rest. Congratulations to you. Continue with your work without any worry. I too am praying for you."

A treatment for blasphemous whisperings

A chief who owned many properties was experiencing blasphemous whisperings. He noted his entire condition in detail and presented it to Hadrat Wālā. He concluded his letter by writing: "If Hadrat can convince me that the existence of Allāh *taʿālā* is proven through rational and traditional proofs, I will be satisfied without even knowing what those proofs are. I am saying this because I have full faith and confidence in Hadrat's intellect."

Hadrat Wālā replied with absolute confidence and firmness: "I take an oath in Allāh's name that the existence of Allāh *taʿālā* is proven with such rational and traditional proofs that even the greatest philosophers can be silenced and have no room to refute them."

No sooner the man read this, all his worries were removed. He was so overcome by joy that he sought permission from Hadrat Wālā to unreservedly give away all his properties to Hadrat Wālā. Where would Hadrat Wālā ever agree to such an offer!?

A reply to a lawyer

This incident took place just yesterday, i.e. 25 Rajab 1354 A.H. After the Jumuʿah assembly, Hadrat Wālā read out portions of a letter written by a very senior and religious lawyer. The lawyer had spent about three weeks in Hadrat Wālā's company and had just returned home. He wrote: "The world over here

has changed." Hadrat Wālā replied: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* at least your Dīn has not changed."

The lawyer added: "When I was there [in Thānah Bhawan], I perceived light and effulgence in everything. I do not perceive that here." Hadrat Wālā replied: "Absence of light is also good."

> There is a darkness prevailing deep in the fountain of life.

Hadrat Wālā then said to us with regard to the above reply: This is not just poetry but the reality because if a person does any good deed in such a condition, he receives more reward. A Hadīth states that holding on to Dīn in the latter times will be more difficult than holding a burning ember in one's hand. If a person does one good deed during that time, he will get the reward of fifty people who did that good deed. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Fifty people from among us [group of Sahābah] or from them?" He replied: "From you."

Hadrat Wālā added: "I say: If a person does a good deed at present, he will get the reward of fifty Abū Bakr's (*radiyallāhu ʿanhu*)." He then said: "This is the fineness in that darkness."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at Hadrat Wālā's words and the lofty meanings which they contain.

The lawyer also wrote: "I am still feeling a bit alien after leaving there and returning home." Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is a mercy. Had you become used to the place, it would have been a sign of lack of perception."

In short, Hadrat Wālā wrote very comforting and consoling replies which were also in accordance with the reality of the situation.

A struggle between two wrestlers

A seeker complained about being perplexed and confused. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Brother, when two wrestlers struggle against each other, you will not find one putting all his force into fighting and the other merely standing idly with his hands at his sides, giving his opponent the opportunity to floor him. Similarly, you are struggling against your self and you will have to use all your force. Even if you cannot overpower it completely, you should at least floor it now and again, and

sometimes it will floor you. But you must never lose courage under any situation. When Allāh *taʿālā* sees you putting all your efforts – despite your weakness, He will give you victory. In short, you must neither lose courage nor lose hope."

A treatment for heedlessness

On returning to his house, one of Hadrat Wālā's khulafā' wrote: "The condition which I experienced in the Khānqāh is leaving me gradually. Kindly inform me if there is any way I can ensure its continued existence." Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "If that was possible, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would not have said to Hadrat Hanzalah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

ولكن يا حنظلة ساعة وساعة

O Hanzalah! There is a time for this and a time for that.

The person also wrote: "The condition of the heart is terrible. Heedlessness has taken root. I request your prayers and also ask for a cure." Hadrat Wālā replied:

العلاج بالضد وهو محل الإختيار والجد

Treatment is by resorting to the opposite. It is within one's choice and comes with striving.

The path simplified

A person wrote: "I find my condition ruined. There is nothing but perplexity."

The reply to it is so comprehensive and effective that it ought to be made one's programme for the rest of one's life. Bearing in mind that it is extremely important, I requested Hadrat Wālā to give it a title, and he named it "The path simplified". It is quoted here from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*.

The desire to put yourself into difficulty is certainly not its treatment. The path is absolutely clear – do not worry about what is not within your control. Taking courage is within your control. If you err, make up for the past through seeking forgiveness, and renew your courage for the future. In addition to courage, adhere to prayer and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! The entire path of Sufism is encapsulated in this concise reply. Ask those who value this teaching and those who practise on it. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire me to

practise on it through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate the ranks, knowledge and cognition of Hadrat Wālā, and may He keep him safe and sound forever. Āmīn. Āmīn. Āmīn.

A person who was distressed by whisperings is consoled

A person whose shaykh was gone for hajj was inundated by whisperings. He became extremely distressed and wrote a heart-rending letter to Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā wrote such a consoling letter that all the man's whisperings disappeared the moment he read it and all his worries melted. He wrote a second letter which is quoted here from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*:

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* I am neither inundated by whisperings nor suspicions. They have disappeared completely. How can I thank Hadrat for having steered and guided an unworthy and sinful person like myself during such a trying time? May Allāh *taʿālā* continue pouring His bounties and favours on you until the day of Resurrection. I hope for your affectionate gaze to fall on me. Āmīn.

I [the compiler] say: This is not the experience of just one but of thousands of seekers on the path that the moment they revert to Hadrat Wālā all their worries and confusion are removed, and the destination seems to be very near. This is not only the effect of what he writes, but also his prayers, attention and the blessings of his acceptance in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. After all, how can words alone be so effective?

Hadrat Wālā himself says: "Although my answers are very brief, they are so much in accordance with the condition of the suffering person that if a person was present at the time when my letter reached the suffering person, he would see the effects of my answers on him. There were some who were on the verge of committing suicide. However – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – the moment my letter reached them, they were fully consoled and desisted from their intention."

Whisperings are signs of īmān

Incidentally, I just came across a seeker's letter on the same subject and Hadrat Wālā's excellent reply in *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. I consider it appropriate to quote it here. There is a slight possibility that I might have quoted the following reply of Hadrat Wālā in a previous section related to his writings on the

subject of whisperings. However, it is difficult to avoid repetitions in such a voluminous book. Anyway, the repetition of so beneficial themes is not without benefit. In fact, additional benefit is envisaged. Without even intending a similarity, the repetitions in the Qur'ān are for the same purpose, viz. additional awareness. I humbly request the reader to excuse me if he occasionally comes across any repetitions in this book. After this short but necessary prelude, I present the seeker's condition and Hadrat Wālā's reply to it.

Condition: I am suffering from a difficult illness. I tried to repulse it but failed. There are times when I see no traces whatsoever of whisperings and fears in my heart. But at other times, I am so inundated by them that I do not think that even an atheist experiences them. At such a time I feel I should commit suicide so that the earth may be purified of me and a worthless person should never be allowed to inhabit this world. I make a humble appeal to Hadrat Wālā to pay special attention to my condition and to pray for me.

Reply: There is no harm in praying for you but you should remember that this condition is not blameworthy in the first place and should not be given so much importance. No one had a more perfect and superior condition than the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. The Ahādīth clearly state that they experienced such conditions. They preferred getting burnt and reduced to coal than to even utter them. Yet, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* referred to it as an indication of clear and explicit īmān. If a person does not rejoice over a matter which is an indication of īmān, then there is no meaning to sorrow. Was salām.

Note: Hadrat Wālā is such an expert on human sentiments and so adept at treating spiritual maladies that he did not advise the above-mentioned seeker – who was on the verge of committing suicide – to be happy over his condition for this would have entailed asking him to do something which was virtually impossible and the advice would not have been of any use. Glory to Allāh! This is how a Hakīm al-Ummah ought to be.

Hadrat Wālā says on a similar topic: "When any person passes away and I consider it necessary to deliver a lecture at the deceased's place, then I only do it after a considerable number

of days have passed. If I were to deliver a lecture while their sorrow is still fresh, the lecture will go to waste.

Consolation to a depressed woman

I recall another incident on the subject of consolation. Although it is not related to the spiritual, it will not be inappropriate to relate it here. My wife was to undergo an operation which posed a danger to her life. We were all extremely worried. She dictated a very despairing letter to me in which she requested Hadrat Wālā's prayers. Hadrat Wālā's reply reached us on the exact day of the operation. He wrote: "I pray with all my heart and soul that – Allāh willing – the operation will be successful. Allāh willing, you will recover and come here [to Thānah Bhawan]."

This glad-tiding brought us all to life and it seemed as if we were injected with new life. It reduced our worry to a great extent and, instead of despair, our hopes had the upper-hand. My wife too was very much consoled and stepped into the operation theatre in a tranquil state. It is not Hadrat Wālā's practice to make such predictions. However, since the patient severely needed her courage to be strengthened, he placed his trust in Allāh *taʿālā* and wrote what he wrote. There is a Hadīth in which Allāh *taʿālā* states that there are some of My servants who, if they take an oath after placing their reliance on Me, I ensure that their oath is fulfilled.

The operation was very successful and the patient recovered fully. She also had an opportunity of visiting Hadrat Wālā. She is residing with me in Thānah Bhawan for the last two years. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. A poet rightly says:

> Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils the objectives of the righteous.

Difference between hope and enthusiasm

A seeker came to the Khānqāh to spend a few days there. In the course of one of Hadrat Wālā's conversations, the man heard Hadrat Wālā quoting the following statement of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: "It is better for a person's body to be in India and his heart to be attached to Makkah than to be living physically in Makkah while his heart is attached to India." The man applied this to his own condition in the Khānqāh and became very worried when he thought about the fact that although he is staying in the Khānqāh, he is thinking a lot of his wife and

children, and is counting the days when he would be leaving. He wrote a note to Hadrat Wālā describing these thoughts and added: "Based on the statement of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, my stay here in the Khānqāh has gone to waste." Hadrat Wālā wrote a very consoling and erudite reply. It is quoted here from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. He wrote:

Thoughts of one's family and constantly thinking about them are natural and from among the Sharʿī rights of one's family. They are praiseworthy. What is blameworthy is when a person leaves them and feels regretful for having left them and come here. In short, a hope is one thing and is harmful, while enthusiasm is something else and is not harmful. When a person is fasting, he desires food and drink and waits for that time to come, but he does not hope and think to himself that if would have been good had I not been fasting.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a fine explanation. Look at the intricate difference which Hadrat Wālā explained between hope and enthusiasm. Even philosophers and expert psychologists could not have thought this up. These realities are exposed to only the super-specialist spiritual physicians of the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

A general principle to control one's natural inclinations

A seeker complained about an intense inclination towards music. He wrote that he even went to the extent of calling a flute-player and asking him to play for him. Hadrat Wālā's reply is quoted from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*:

It is generally not possible to put a complete end to an attraction and inclination. However, it can be weakened through careful planning to the extent that it is not difficult to combat. There is only one step and procedure for it, viz. to practically oppose that inclination. Although you may experience difficulty, you will have to bear it. In this way, some people are able to weaken the inclination quickly while it takes longer for others. This is dependent on differences in temperament. There is always a need for resolve and courage to abstain. However, when it weakens, one is able to succeed in his resolution very quickly. Expecting to achieve anything more is merely a hope and nothing else. Unless, off course it is a supernatural feat. Once this principle is understood and

adopted, all worries from natural inclinations are blown away. Bear this in mind and thank Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! The entire world is vexed by natural inclinations and resorts to thousands of plans and procedures but cannot succeed. Look at the comprehensive, effective, unique and simple principle provided by Hadrat Wālā. Look at the beneficial and matchless procedure which he taught in order to bring balance in one's life.

The effect of Hadrat Wālā's focus

I personally experienced this and got confirmation for it from my fellow Pīr Bhāis that without even writing a note to Hadrat Wālā, I experience a decrease in my worries. And once I receive a letter from him, all worries are completely removed. In fact, many times I can perceive when my letter has reached Hadrat Wālā. Because after reading my letter, his focus turns towards me and I perceive a powerful pull. I experience this constantly during my present stay at the Khānqāh. If I am not present in an assembly and Hadrat Wālā happens to think of me because of some work which has to do with me, then no matter where I am, I suddenly experience a turning towards Allāh *ta'ālā*. I understand by it that Hadrat Wālā is most probably thinking of me at the moment and directing his focus towards me. However, since this thinking is not on the level of conviction, I do not leave my work and go to him solely on the basis of this pull.

Hadrat Wālā's focus creates a pull

This happened just a few days ago. I had asked Hadrat Wālā about a couplet which I could not remember. Hadrat Wālā quoted just one couplet from it and said: "I only recall this one line." Then after the zuhr assembly, I proceeded to my room which was at quite a distance from Hadrat Wālā's sitting place and I got occupied with writing this book, *Ashraf as-Sawānih*. Hadrat Wālā wrote the entire couplet on a piece of paper and sent it to me. The whole couplet is:

> Peace be on you when you are in my heart. Although
> you are out of sight, you are present in my heart.

Hadrat Wālā was writing this couplet and sending it to me while I was experiencing that pull which I described above. The pull was so strong and intense that I felt I should get up

immediately and present myself before him because I was quite convinced that Hadrat Wālā is thinking of me at the time. However, since I was occupied with my work, I did not rely on my conviction and continued writing. I was virtually convinced when the note reached me. The beauty of the entire episode was that the couplet was of the same theme and in line with the condition which I was experiencing. I also feel it was possible that Hadrat Wālā was conscious of the subject matter at the time when he was writing it and its reflection was cast onto my heart. I took a lot of joy in taking this particular meaning from the couplet that Hadrat Wālā was addressing me personally through this couplet. I am saying this because I felt that Hadrat Wālā was really thinking of me at the time.

Some time ago, I was in the room of a person who was living upstairs. I felt a pull and I immediately thought that Hadrat Wālā was thinking of me at the time. Since I was free, I went downstairs immediately to present myself before him. Hadrat Wālā had a note in his hand, waiting for someone to come by so that he could call for me. In the meantime, I reached there myself. He said: "I was about to call for you." Hadrat Wālā began to smile when I described the pull which I felt in my heart. Hadrat Wālā does not consider such matters to be worthy of any attention and considers them to be merely products of one's imagination. Another point which is worthy of mention here is that whenever I experience such a pull, it is always accompanied with a consciousness of Allāh's presence. In other words, I immediately experience the presence of Allāh *taʿālā*. I consider this to be the result of Hadrat Wālā's focus and think to myself that his attention is turned to me at present and he is thinking of me.

The effects of Hadrat Wālā's writing

I also remember my impressions of my early days. When I used to receive Hadrat Wālā's letters, merely looking at the writing used to cause a special condition in my heart no matter what I was occupied in at the time. I recall to this day how I experienced such a special condition at the exact time when I had presented myself in court.

Presence of Allāh is perceived

When I used to leave Hadrat Wālā after having presented myself before him, I would experience a unique presence of

Allāh *taʿālā* on my way back. It used to be a joyful and powerful condition which I would be immersed in throughout the way. I clearly recall one of those occasions. I was so overcome by Allāh’s presence that on my way back, I was walking like a madman with my hands making a circle, as if I was encircling my beloved. On another of such occasions, I was repeating the following couplet of H̲āfiz̲ Shīrāzī *rah̲imahullāh*, was completely overwhelmed by it and was reduced to sobbing.

> O Khid̲r! Help a bashful person like me because I am on foot while my companion is riding on his conveyance.

The heart experiences a unique emotion

On one occasion, after I remained in H̲ad̲rat Wālā’s company for one month and was taking leave from him, my heart experienced a unique emotion. I was very affected by it and a few couplets came spontaneously to my mind. I still recall some of them.

> Look at this abundant affection to me. I was not worthy of it.
>
> May I be sacrificed for this mercy of yours. I was not worthy of it.
>
> O the most Affectionate one! This had been decreed since eternity from Your court.
>
> You embraced me fully under your wing. I was not worthy of it.
>
> The One is my deity, and the best of the creation is my Prophet.
>
> My shaykh too is the Qut̲b of his time. I was not worthy of it.

Presenting myself with yearning and enthusiasm

I described my emotions when I was leaving H̲ad̲rat Wālā. I feel I should describe them when I presented myself before him.

I mentioned previously that I used to bear many expenses and long journeys for just a few hours of H̲ad̲rat Wālā’s company. Moreover, I used to take lengthy half-paid and unpaid leaves, and remain with him for months, and sometimes for years. By the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, I have presently taken two years and

four month's leave and am in his service. I presented myself with genuine yearning and enthusiasm on each of these occasions. In my extreme joy, I would recite couplets which described my condition. Each time I presented myself before him was a manifestation of the following couplet:

> O beloved! The fire of your separation has turned my heart into a kebab. The flood of enthusiasm to see you has made my body hollow.

I got an opportunity to go to Thānah Bhawan after a very long time. I penned many couplets on this occasion. Some of them are quoted here so that the reader will be able to gauge my condition:

> I did not get a chance to go to the house of love for many years.
>
> The desire to sing out in an intoxicated way filled my heart for many years.
>
> There was a time when the heart was the Ka'bah, it [the heart] has become an idol-house for many years.
>
> I have been restless since many years to see you manifest yourself.
>
> I have been turned over by the intoxicating eye of the mistress for many years.
>
> I have been walking around with my empty measure for many years.
>
> My yearning-filled heart goes to that gathering in this way, where I see a beautiful form which I hadn't seen for so many years.

Taking a long unpaid leave to present myself

Before giving up my post as a deputy collector, I had taken a long unpaid leave and decided that I will not go to work until I get a job in the education department – for which I had applied.

My extreme joy at getting a room in the Khānqāh

On the same occasion, I was informed that there were two rooms available for my stay in the Khānqāh and that one of them which had been used by Hadrat Wālā at some time in the

past was now available for me. I was overjoyed when I came to know of this.

Enthusiasm along the way

Whenever I had the occasion to come to Thānah Bhawan, I used to come with real enthusiasm and yearning. My entire journey used to be filled with eagerness and zeal. On one of those occasions, I was accompanied by like-minded Pīr Bhāis. We were picturing Hadrat Wālā throughout our journey and singing the following couplet with real emotion:

> Any person who treads the path of love without a guide is bound to pass his entire life without learning anything about love.

Bearing in mind that these companions were Pīr Bhāis, very informal friends and love poets [who composed poetry on Allāh's love], our emotions increased as we moved along. There were no other passengers on our coach apart from us and a few Nepalese army people. On seeing our mood, the Nepalese began singing along and some of them even started to dance. On seeing them like this, my friends said to me: "Look! These people have been affected by your enthusiasm and zeal."

Tranquillity on reaching Thānah Bhawan

In short, whether I was coming to meet Hadrat Wālā or leaving his blessed company, the journey was always filled with emotion, but my mood used to settle down once I met him. Hadrat Sheftah *rahimahullāh* says:

> The intelligent ones get up and leave your presence as madmen. And madmen sit in your assembly as though they are intelligent people.

When I asked Hadrat Wālā the reason for this, he said: "When a person is far away, he is overcome by enthusiasm and yearning, but when he is near, he experiences affinity. There is zeal in yearning, and tranquillity in affinity."

I [the compiler] say: As a result of this tranquillity, sometimes a seeker incorrectly feels that he has become like a new and inexperienced person. Consequently, in the course of his stay at the Khānqāh, one of the khulafā' felt that he had become like this. He noted his complaint and also quoted the following couplets of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* with genuine remorse:

> You are given a pure drink, you are in a safe place and an affectionate friend is the one who is giving you this drink. O heart! If you cannot achieve anything even under such excellent circumstances, when will you ever achieve it?

Hadrat Wālā comforted his khalīfah by saying: "The moon appears to be lightless in the presence of the sun, while it is not really lightless. Instead, it continues deriving light from the sun. However, it does not perceive and realize its own light when in the presence of the sun."

Meditation for consolation

The incidents on the subject of consolation which were quoted above contained Hadrat Wālā's consolation of the seekers. I now relate an incident which shows how he consoled his own self.

On experiencing a most unfortunate incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for firmly embedding the meditation of His being and Absolute King and Most Wise in my heart. This enabled me overcome the worst of tragedies – whether they were related to the external or internal self – and did not cause me to experience any worry and stress. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, when I meditated on these two attributes of Allāh *taʿālā*, my mind became fully convinced that Allāh *taʿālā* is the Absolute King and the Most Wise."

"Bearing in mind that Allāh *taʿālā* is the Absolute King, He has the full authority to do as and when He wills to His creation. He has full right and authority to do whatever and whenever He wills to His creation both externally and internally. No one can express the slightest complaint. Bearing in mind that He is Most Wise, I am fully at ease with the fact that whatever He does is done with absolute wisdom. There is therefore no reason whatsoever for me to worry and stress."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a high level of meditation. If this is firmly embedded in a person, he will not experience any type of external or internal worry. I will now conclude this theme of consolation which came in coincidentally with this blessed story. I will quote a few more incidents related to other themes and conclude my own story. I will then quote Hadrat Wālā's general statements on the theme of spiritual training. May

Allāh *taʿālā* help me. Inspiration is only from Him, I place my trust in Him and I turn to Him.

Fourth Story: A Treatment For Imaginary Sins

I was severely affected by sins which were solely in my mind. I was so affected by them that I was on the verge of considering myself to be rejected. The inundation of evil thoughts embittered my life and I almost lost hope about my own reformation. A thought is something which enters a person's mind very swiftly - without even perceiving it – and moves from one point to another in a matter of split seconds. When a person is distressed by them, it becomes difficult to identify which level of its occurrence or continuance is within one's choice and which is not. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to repulse a thought.

In short, it is relatively easier to save one's self from sins which are connected to one's body parts than those which are connected to one's thoughts. The diagnosis and treatment of the first is easier. While the second, because it is unseen and can cause confusion, is difficult to diagnose and treat.

I was in a state of real worry when I wrote to Hadrat Wālā and described my situation to him. Although he was very weak at the time, he penned an excellent treatment. The illness which I considered to be a mountain was reduced to bits. The life which appeared very bitter became – through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – forever enjoyable. This is because he wrote a very simple, comprehensive and all-embracing treatment which can be made a model forever. All sins of the mind, e.g. pride, ostentation, evil thoughts, fantasies, jealousy, malice, hatred, etc. can be easily abstained from provided a person is conscious of the treatment.

Another advantage of his treatment is that it is a treatment on one hand, and also a gauge to identify between wilful and unwitting thoughts. Through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā's prayers and focus, the moment I read his reply which contained the treatment, my thoughts disappeared as if they did not even exist. It is my strong hope that – Allāh willing - anyone having even the slightest affinity with the path will be able to treat all his internal illnesses of the mind from the following treatment prescribed by Hadrat Wālā. After seeing the comprehensiveness and benefit of this reply, Hadrat Wālā

himself gave it a title of its own, viz. the treatment for thoughts. Many seekers who heard it from me made copies of it. This demonstrates its benefit and general need. The reply follows:

> A simple treatment for it is that when you are inundated with thoughts, you must wilfully and wittingly direct yourself towards pious thoughts and remain focussed in that direction. If, after this, the thoughts remain and new thoughts come to you, then they are certainly not within your control. This is because two conflicting types of thoughts cannot come together by one's choice [one will have to be wilful and the other unintentional]. Confusion in this regard is now removed. If you experience any negligence in wilfully directing yourself to good thoughts and then you realize your negligence, you must make up for it through seeking forgiveness. You must then follow it with the same treatment as described.
>
> There is no simpler method. Make it your code of practice and do not worry after that.

Fifth Story: Differences In Approach To Desirable Acts

I was with Hadrat Wālā on a journey to Delhi. As was his practice, he went for his morning walk while reciting the Qur'ān. Some people joined him but he stopped them because when he is not used to the company of certain people as yet, he finds himself distracted. I was on the verge of joining the others to go back, but Hadrat Wālā called me and as we proceeded he said: "The prohibition was for those with whom I am not informal as yet." He added: "If every woman desires to be treated like a wife it will be foolishness on her part."

Hadrat Wālā used to say in this regard: "Initially, for a long time I was on this misunderstanding that every person must be treated in the same manner. I had to bear many discomforts because of it. Allāh *taʿālā* then exposed this reality to me that there is no need for this because the special treatment which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* accorded to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was not accorded to others. When he used to see these two in his assemblies, he would overjoyed and smile. They too would be happy at seeing him and smile. This shows that equal

treatment in obligatory acts is essential, but not in desirable acts.

Sixth Story: Picturing One's Shaykh

I still recall my days of zeal and enthusiasm when I used to imagine that Hadrat Wālā has pervaded my entire body from head to toe, and I have pervaded his entire body from head to toe. This used to bring me intense joy for long periods of time. I recall Hadrat Wālā's statement in this regard: "If a person unwittingly pictures and imagines his shaykh, there is no harm in it. Instead, it is beneficial. If not, he must think of Allāh *taʿālā* only because He is the sole and original objective. This was the teaching of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib."

Seventh Story: An Example Of An Average And A Seasoned Seeker

I accompanied Hadrat Wālā on one of his morning walks. On the way we came across two farms on the left and right sides of the road. One had matured and become totally dry. The other was still flowering and was very green, lush and attractive. Hadrat Wālā's heart knows only one thing, he is conscious of it all the time and his mind goes to it even when it bears the slightest similarity. The moment he saw these two fields, he said to me: "Look! This is the difference in the conditions of an average and a seasoned seeker. The condition of an average seeker is like this green and lush farm which appears very attractive, but in its present condition is of no use apart from being cut and given as food to cattle. On the other hand, this plantation of wheat which has matured and become dry, it may appear colourless, unattractive and dry, it contains seeds and grains which are the actual objectives of cultivating them. You can acquire grain from them whenever you like and use the grain as food. In short, one is only suitable as fodder for cattle while the other is food for humans."

"In the same way, an average seeker only experiences conditions which appear to be very good and are considered to be indications of piety. On the other hand, a seasoned seeker may appear to be completely devoid of conditions, but he has the original and fundamental treasure and wealth."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how well this example applies!

Eighth Story: Imprints On The Heart

On one occasion Hadrat Wālā was speaking against the prints which we normally see on prayer mats and complained that they divert the heart of the person performing salāh. He added: "I do not even like clothes which are embroidered with flowers even though I myself wear them. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, I do not speak in favour of such garments just because I wear them." He then said: "Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* received a sheet which was embossed with flowers as a gift. After the salāh, he asked the person for a plain sheet, kept the embossed one aside and said: "The prints on this sheet almost occupied my heart." If Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw the possibility of being diverted, who is there among us who can claim that our heart cannot be diverted by such prints and designs." Hadrat Wālā added: "How can prints and designs of clothes be liked when the spiritual masters say that even the heart should not have any prints on it. Prints and designs on the heart refer to the states and conditions of the heart. The heart ought to be empty of all such things. It ought to contain absolute servitude. The bidʿatīs are very attached to states and conditions while the spiritual masters dislike them. Anyway, this is in itself a condition which cannot be understood merely through an explanation. They can only be understood when they are personally experienced." Hadrat Wālā then quoted two couplets of Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* in his *Mathnawī* and said: "I am happy over the fact that I recalled these couplets because they support what I just said. It appeared to be something new but these couplets prove that it is nothing new. It is supported by the statements of the spiritual masters of the past."

Ninth Story: Thinking Of The Fruits Of Dhikr

One day Hadrat Wālā either said to me or said in a general address that one should neither expect to see the fruits of dhikr nor imagine any condition or state in one's mind. One should not allow one's imagination to influence one in any way. All conditions must be handed over to Allāh *taʿālā* and He will confer whatever He considers best and most appropriate to one's capabilities.

It is enough for a person to have a moderate focus on the dhikr at the time of dhikr or, if it can be easily achieved, to turn his

focus on the Being who is remembered. The condition of "moderate" has been attached because excessive focus causes affliction to the heart and mind. This causes a defect in even in the situations where focus is essential. There is another point which is also very essential in this regard: Do not allow the demands to see the fruits [of dhikr] to develop in one's temperament because apart from causing confusion – which harms one concentration which is the basis of benefit in this path – it could result in despondency. I have personally experienced this. I am naturally demanding and hasty, and this is Allāh's mercy or else I would not have been able to serve the Dīn as much as I did. The very same demanding and hasty disposition would cause me distress to the extent of experiencing whisperings of suicide. I felt this demand all the time that I must quickly acquire whatever I have to and there must be no delay in it.

Tenth Story: Practising On Concessions

Hadrat Wālā said one day in the course of one of his discussions: As regards certain conditions, I consider acting on concessions as opposed to obligations to be rectification. This is because the person who always practises on obligations may look at his actions with pride and feel that whatever he is receiving for them is less than what he ought to receive. A complaint will come into his heart and he will think to himself: "I have been bearing such difficulties of asceticism and piety for so long and I have been occupying myself for so long in dhikr and spiritual practices but I have not been conferred with anything as yet." What a filthy thought! On the other hand, the one who acts on concessions occasionally can never look at his actions with pride and will consider his dhikr and spiritual practices to be lopsided. No matter what he receives, he will consider it in excess of his actions. Even if he does not experience any spiritual states and conditions, he can never develop any complaint because he thinks to himself that his actions are in no way worthy of fruits. Whereas the first person will always expect major fruits and results, and when he is not given them, he will complain. No matter what, the one who practises on concessions relies more on prayers to Allāh *taʿālā* then on his own actions. This naturally creates love for Allāh *taʿālā*. What a great bounty this is!

The fact of the matter is that our hearts – especially in these times – are so weak that they do not develop love for Allāh *taʿālā* without witnessing His mercy. I shouldn't be really saying this because people will become lax in their actions, but because there was a greater danger in the case of not mentioning it, I said it. Now that I have said that this should not be really discussed, we can understand that there is the possibility of misunderstandings on this subject. I have, so to speak, issued a warning that if anyone has any misunderstanding this regard, he must revert to a spiritual master; he must not derive his own incorrect meaning. It was for the very purpose of removing any misunderstanding that I attached this precondition in the beginning that I consider acting on concessions for only "certain conditions" to be more beneficial in the field of rectification. As for acting on obligations, this in itself is certainly superior as is obvious.

The Reality Of Abstinence

In the course of the above discussion, a scholar said: "But there is a lot of virtue in abstinence?!" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Abstinence does not mean abstaining totally from pleasures, rather reducing pleasures is sufficient for abstinence. In other words, a person must not be so immersed in pleasures that he worries about them all the time, causing him to think that such and such food has to be cooked or I ought to purchase such and such item. He hears that rice from a particular place is of a high quality, so he makes sure he obtains it from there. He hears that cream from a certain place is of a high quality so he asks someone to bring it for him from there. He is constantly worried about wearing expensive clothes and eating exotic dishes. All these things certainly negate abstinence. But if a person obtains certain pleasures without paying special attention to them, this is considered to be Allāh's bounty and he must be grateful to Allāh *taʿālā* for it.

In the same way, eating too little is not abstinence and is neither the objective. Allāh forbid, our eating less will not ensure our value in the treasures of Allāh *taʿālā*. We will never be considered to be very munificent employees who do not take their full wage. Allāh *taʿālā* does not bother about such matters. At the same time, do not eat so much that you get a stomach-ache. Our Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's view was that the self

should be given a very good rest and also made to work to the full.

When I learn that a certain good meal is to be cooked on a particular day, I enjoy myself doing work on that day because I think to myself that when I complete my work, I will get something good to eat. We must certainly have something which encourages the self. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said one day: “Miyā Ashraf ʿAlī! You must always drink cold water so that you thank Allāh *taʿālā* from the depths of your heart. If the water is warm, you will thank Allāh *taʿālā* verbally but your heart will not.”

Eleventh Story: The Conditions Of An Average And A Seasoned Seeker

On one occasion Hadrat Wālā went to the bathroom of the musjid to fetch hot water. He personally went to bring it because he did not like to ask anyone to carry out such tasks for him if he was not yet comfortable and open with the person. There was no such person present at the time. When he removed the lid of the drum [in which the water was heated], a fine steam emanated which felt very good. At the same time, smoke from the bottom – where the fire was heating the drum – emanated, got into his eyes and caused them to burn. After relating this incident, he said: “This is the difference in the conditions of an average and a seasoned seeker. The seasoned seeker is not devoid of conditions but they are very subtle and fine like the steam. They are fine because they stem from spirituality. On the other hand, the conditions of an average seeker are raging and burning; there is no fineness in them; as is the case with smoke. They are like this because they stem from the person’s disposition.

Twelfth Story: Spiritual Exercises

One day there was no breeze at all, it was scorching hot and people were perspiring. After the compulsory salāh, the attendants surrounded Hadrat Wālā and began fanning him. Hadrat Wālā as yet had to perform the Sunnah salāh, so he remained standing so that his perspiration could dry because he never permitted anyone to fan him while he was performing salāh. The reason why he did not permit it is that he felt it most unbecoming of a person to adopt the status of one who is served while performing salāh. Anyway, all the attendants were fanning him when a cool breeze suddenly blew that way and

refreshed the souls. Hadrat Wālā stopped the fanners immediately and said: "Glory to Allāh! The comfort and relief which this natural breeze brought were not experienced with so many fans. A single gust of natural breeze is most certainly much better than a thousand fans."

Hadrat Wālā added: "In the same way, a thousand spiritual exercises and forms of striving cannot produce the results which can be realized from a single pull from Allāh *taʿālā*."

Note: I now conclude my long story with this theme on the divine pull of Allāh *taʿālā* as related by Hadrat Wālā. I have witnessed and heard thousands of incidents and statements of Hadrat Wālā; how many can I relate here! If any reader is desirous of more he may refer to the first volume of *Ahsan al-ʿAzīz* in which I penned a considerable number of statements which I personally heard and incidents which I myself witnessed.

The sole purpose behind relating my personal incidents and conditions in this section was to demonstrate Hadrat Wālā's power of bestowal and instruction. If in the course of relating incidents, the incidents of the writer himself and within them the conditions and teachings of the one whose biography is written are included, they will prove to be more convincing. My personal accounts are really manifestations of the following couplet of Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*:

> The best thing is to relate the secrets of the beloveds
> through the stories of others.

If it were not for the above reason, recounting my own stories was extremely embarrassing for me and still is. In fact, I feel I should remove all these stories but since they have already been included in the manuscript, it is quite difficult to remove them. Furthermore, I do not have the time to rewrite the themes and conditions related to Hadrat Wālā which were mentioned within my own stories. I therefore request the reader to focus on the original objective of presenting the life of Hadrat Wālā, and to turn a blind eye to my own conditions. I request the reader to pray for my rectification.

I now conclude with a statement of Hadrat Wālā which he wrote in one of his letters to me. I am quoting it to support what I just said in the previous paragraph: "If in the course of this insignificant person's [i.e. Hadrat Wālā's] biography,

anyone expresses his own condition, then it is not disagreeable because it is not intentional."

In short, I received permission from Hadrat Wālā to express some of my own conditions in his biography.

INSTRUCTIONS AND EXHORTATIONS

As promised, I now present some of Hadrat Wālā's exhortations – both the published ones and the unpublished ones. These have been penned specifically by Hadrat Wālā. *Tarbīyyatus Sālik* is a collection of Hadrat Wālā's impeccable prescriptions and diagnoses which emanated from his spiritual clinic. It would be perfectly in order to refer to it as a complete pharmacopoeia of Sufism. It contains countless letters from seekers with Hadrat Wālā's replies. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* this programme is continuing to this day. May Allāh *taʿālā* increase it and enable it to flourish.

I collated 100 letters and replies at random and present them here to the reader. In order to avoid this section becoming too lengthy, I quoted the crux of the letters of the seekers, but in a manner which preserves the essence of what they wrote. However, Hadrat Wālā's replies are quoted verbatim because this is the real objective here.

Tarbīyyatus Sālik is filled with unique and unparalleled spiritual facts which could be referred to as a treasure of jewels. Fearing a lengthy presentation, I had to force myself and restrain my pen to restrict myself to just 100. No matter which reply of Hadrat Wālā my eyes fell on, I felt it ought to be included in this collection. The following couplet applies here:

> No matter at which spot I look from head to toe, the beauty tugs at my heart and says: "This spot is the most beautiful."

Those who are desirous of studying more of his exhortations should refer to the original *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. In the course of selecting these 100, I used to read them before Hadrat Wālā so that he could make corrections if he considered it necessary. On hearing them, those who were present in the assembly and Hadrat Wālā himself would be very much affected by them. He would say in astonishment:

> I could never have written such themes from my own knowledge [they are certainly divinely inspired]. It is solely through Allāh's grace for having enabled me to write such beneficial themes when they were needed for the rectification of the seekers. When I listen to

> the questions now and think to myself what answer I should give, I cannot come to any definitive reply. Whichever question I hear, I am confounded into thinking: What answer could I have given to such a difficult question? And when I hear the answer read to me, I am surprised and think to myself: Is this really my answer? Writing such answers is certainly beyond my knowledge. Had they been the results of my own knowledge, my knowledge at present would have certainly been the same. Why, then, are the same answers not coming to my mind now?! This clearly shows that I was helped by Allāh *taʿālā*. After all, what is my worth? I am nothing. How could I write such answers by myself?

Hadrat Wālā also said the following as a way of expressing Allāh's favours and not out of pride:

> My answers will really be appreciated when the same questions are posed to other Sufis and their replies are obtained. Thousands of thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that research and codification on all matters related to Sufism have been accomplished for several centuries to come, and it was not accomplished with such proliferation for several centuries before. This is solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of Barhe Miyā (Hadrat Hājī Sāhib).

After this necessary prelude, the selected exhortations are presented to the reader.

1. Wish For Doubts Not To Creep In

A seeker wrote: It is my wish for doubts not to creep into me.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Tomorrow you must wish that you do not catch a fever."

Hadrat Wālā had wrote to him prior to this: "The creeping in of unintentional doubts does not negate belief in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as true."

2. Fear Of Death

A seeker wrote: I fear and hate death whereas it is the means of meeting Allāh *taʿālā*, and the Sufis consider death to be the most beloved.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You are wrong. I have come across some spiritual masters who feared death just like you. This stems from a weak heart which is certainly not blameworthy."

The same seeker asked: What means did the Sufis acquire through which they got rid off dislike for death completely?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "It was the strength of their heart or the strength of the inspiration which they received, both of which are not objectives. They are merely conferred by Allāh *taʿālā*."

3. Dislike For A Bidʿatī

In reply to a question of a seeker, Hadrat Wālā wrote: "Dislike for a bidʿatī is not pride. However, if he repents and you still dislike him, it is pride. If not, it is dislike for Allāh's sake."

4. Recitation Of Qur'ān And Spiritual Practices

After learning about the virtues of reciting the Qur'ān, a seeker wanted to give up all other spiritual practices and restrict himself to reciting the Qur'ān. Hadrat Wālā wrote: "More inclination towards a particular practice only occurs when other practices are present. If not, one becomes fed up of the same thing. A major proof of this is that the pious predecessors did not do this."

5. Acquisition Of Affinity And The Disappearance Of The Effects Of Pride

A senior khalīfah asked: What are the effects of the acquisition of affinity? He also asked about the disappearance of the effects of pride. Hadrat Wālā replied: "These are all matters related to assumptions like the assumption of good physical health. However, satisfaction in this regard is said to be like conviction. As for the effects of the acquisition of affinity, they are: Continuous obedience [to Allāh *taʿālā*], actions which are within one's choice become as if they are now second nature to the person, rare instances of disobedience, severe regret and intense efforts to make up for incidental acts of disobedience, overpowering dhikr with the tongue and heart, i.e. consciousness and awareness of Allāh *taʿālā*. As for the second point, it essentially boils down to the sentiment of the patient and this is supported by the effects. In other words, the absence of incidents of pride, overwhelming effects of humility and intense remorse over actions which smack of pride.

6. Love For Allāh

A seeker wrote: I am engaging in verbal dhikr but I see no effects whatsoever of it in my heart. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, my actions are consistent but I feel that my heart is devoid of love for Him. Hadrat Wālā replied: "What type of love is your heart devoid of? Of doctrinal and rational love or of natural love? If it is the latter, it is not harmful. If it is the former, you would not remorse over its absence. Why are you remorseful over it? Your remorse is in itself proof that you are not devoid of love."

The same seeker also wrote: My condition is certainly not as it ought to be. Hadrat Wālā replied: "That day will be a day of mourning when you think you have acquired the condition which you ought to have because even the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* feel that they have not acquired the condition as they ought to have acquired. They say:

ما عبدناك حق عبادتك

We have not worshipped You as You ought to have been worshipped.

7. Safeguarding One's Self Against Evil Gazes

A seeker wrote: When I am overcome with an urge to cast evil gazes, I console myself by saying to myself: What benefit is there in committing a sin which does not bring any benefit? Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is a very beneficial and effective meditation."

8. A Gaze Which Is Not Sinful

A seeker wrote: If my gaze falls on a young boy or woman while I am walking about, I shift my gaze immediately. What I would like to know is that is the first glance a cause of sin or not? Hadrat Wālā replied: "Is the first gaze intentional or not? If there is no intent in it, is there any intent in its continuation or not? If there is no intention in its continuation as well, then the image which forms in the mind after this gaze, do you intend the continuation of that image or the continuation of that enjoyment?"

The seeker also wrote: After shifting my gaze, an image of whom I saw develops in my mind. But there are times when I

do not remember repulsing that image the moment it comes to my mind.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is essential to remember it. If you cannot remember it, write a warning against it on a piece of paper and tie it to your wrist or side [so that it serves as a reminder]."

9. Freedom From The Habit Of Speaking Lies

Hadrat Wālā posed a question to a seeker: "Do you speak a lie by your own will or out of compulsion?" The seeker replied: "It is by my own will but because I am so immersed in speaking lies it has become like a compulsion. I request Hadrat's treatment."

Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "When you give it up by taking the courage and by your own will, and impose on yourself to make this your habit, then not speaking lies will become like a compulsion. This is the treatment for it."

10. The Effects Of Studying The Books Of Polytheists And Perverse People

An erudite scholar is a murīd of another shaykh. He is translating the Qur'ān into English, and in order to refute the objections of the perverse ones, he has to read and study their books. He wrote to Hadrat Wālā thus: "I would like to relate something about my heart. During the days when I get to read a lot of books on Sufism, especially *Kalīd Mathnawī* (referring to the commentary of the *Mathnawī* written by Hadrat Wālā), *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm* and other similar books, I perceive a special joy in my heart, softness in my temperament, and I see very pure dreams. Now that I am busy translating the Qur'ān and am occupied in responding to the objections of the perverse ones, I find a considerable drop in the above-described condition. Presently, I have stopped studying books on Sufism completely and am reading thousands of pages on the beliefs of the polytheists and enemies of Islam. Is this darkness and severity not the result of reading these books?"

Hadrat Wālā replied:

Reading their books is the reason for the difference in your condition, however it is not really darkness or severity because darkness and severity are always doctrinal while your present

condition and effect is natural. For example, a person has an aversion to eating excreta. It is likened to the real darkness and severity. Another is the dislike a person experiences when impurity falls on his hands or feet. It is likened to the present condition and effect which you are experiencing. Obviously, eating excreta – which is a sin – is harmful spiritually while impurity falling on the body is not spiritually harmful. In fact, if you have to touch the impurity on your body or on the body of another with the intention of removing it, it would be more beneficial to the internal self because it is an act of obedience. As for the natural foulness and vexation which is experienced, it will be a source of reward because of the striving to remove it. Thereafter, when the hand is rubbed with soil or soap and washed, it will become cleaner than what it was. By the will of Allāh, you are occupied in purification. This will result in an increase in your purity and effulgence. However, it would be better if you use the soap at the same time. In other words, continue reading some books on Sufism and engage in a bit of dhikr.

11. How To Create A Habit For Qur'ān Recitation

A seeker complained: I find it difficult to read even one pārā/juz of the Qur'ān. In fact, I miss out on this reading most of the time. But I do not experience any burden in other forms of dhikr and reading the Qur'ān from memory throughout the day.

Hadrat Wālā replied: If you have not memorized the Qur'ān, you must impose on yourself to read more. While reading, you must think to yourself that ten rewards for each letter are being recorded in your book of deeds. Where else can you receive such a treasure!? Thinking in this manner is not merely a figment of your imagination but the reality because a Hadīth clearly makes mention of these rewards. You must also meditate over the fact that one is rewarded for looking at the letters of the Qur'ān. This collective imagination will remove the burden which you are experiencing and looking into the Qur'ān and reading will gradually become easier. If you have memorized the Qur'ān and are able to read correctly from memory, you will be rewarded for reading it in this way as well because the actual objective is realized. There is no need to pay too much of attention to it."

12. The Condition Of A Novice

A seeker wrote: I am experiencing a strange condition these days. I feel like repeating the words "Allāh Allāh" all the time. My heart is not inclined to anything else. In fact, the interest which I previously had in Hadīth lessons and reading the Qur'ān is no longer there.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "This generally happens in the beginning. Like an infant who likes milk all the time. But as time goes on, he develops a liking for other foods as well."

Note: Another seeker had made a similar complaint. Hadrat Wālā wrote to him: "This generally happens in the beginning and is also experienced towards the end. In most cases, the reason for this is that there is a type of simplicity and plainness in dhikr, while a type of complexity in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. There is more concentration in plainness and more confusion in complexity because of the various aspects which the latter contains.

13. A Test Of Pride

A seeker who had spent some time in the Khānqāh wrote: I do not perceive any pride in me at present. I request Hadrat to provide me with a few points whereby I could test whether I still have pride or it has left me.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "A few points to test pride are not enough. Different temperaments respond differently to what causes pride and what does not. You should therefore not bother about such a test. If you have a doubt in any particular matter, inform me and I will advise you accordingly."

The same person also posed other questions: I am overwhelmed with love for Hadrat. I think of Hadrat most of the time in my salāh and sometimes think of you even for the sake of concentration in salāh.

Hadrat Wālā: "This should not be done wittingly and intentionally in salāh."

The person: "I do not feel like leaving the Khānqāh but I plan to leave tomorrow because of my Madrasah."

Hadrat Wālā: "Sometimes distance is more beneficial than closeness."

The person: "I perceive a certain fear for Hadrat causing me to lose courage to speak to you."

Hadrat Wālā: "This stems from a tinge of feelings of awe. It is most beneficial in the path."

14. Dislike For Evil Gazes

A seeker wrote: I do not find a dislike for evil gazes within me. I have to strive to curtail my self.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "We are ordered to dislike it or to abstain from acting on its demands."

15. The Humility Of A Khalīfah

A khalīfah wrote: I feel most bashful when anyone comes to me and requests bayʿah at my hands. I think to myself: He is better than me in every way, how can I accept his bayʿah?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Continue accepting murīds so that your humility increases."

16. Sternness

A person who is pledged to another shaykh wrote: There are times when I become extremely stern and strict on matters relating to Dīn and this world. I lose control over myself.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Be conscious and aware of your moods all the time. Impose on yourself to repeat this consciousness and awareness. This is the treatment for it. It will eventually become your second nature."

The same person also wrote: "When I reprimand people repeatedly about salāh and other acts, and they still do not pay heed, I become angry at them. I then think to myself that my anger was for my self, and why are they not listening to me?"

Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is an easy test for it. Check if your anger is the same or close to it when someone else reprimands them."

17. The Method Of Rectification

A seeker wrote: I do not know the method of rectification. Please prescribe a method for me.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The method is for you to express each defect of yours to me and ask me for a treatment for it. You

must then practise on what I say to you and inform me after practising on it."

18. Punctuality In Salāh And Qur'ān Recitation

A seeker wrote: I have to impose on myself to perform salāh and read the Qur'ān. Please show me a way which would convert this need to impose into ease and enthusiasm.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no procedure for it. This matter is neither in the control of the shaykh nor of the seeker."

Similarly, a BA graduate seeker wrote: I believe salāh to be essential but I am not inclined to it. When I do experience an inclination, I do not experience any enjoyment in my salāh.

Hadrat Wālā replied to the first point: "What is essential, for you to be inclined or for you to incline yourself?" His reply to the second point was: "What is essential, to experience joy or to carry out the action?"

Another seeker wrote: "I do not experience any joy in my spiritual practices and devotions." Hadrat Wālā replied: "What is the objective, joy or presence of mind and heart? And that too, what type of presence, intentional or unwitting?"

19. Self-Conceit

A seeker listed a few examples of self-conceit and asked for a treatment.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "If, while you are thinking of Allāh's bounties on yourself, you think you are not receiving them because you deserve them but are gifts from Allāh *taʿālā* which He can take away immediately if He wills, and that it is solely out of His mercy that He conferred them to you without deserving them; and with regard to others, you think to yourself that although they do not enjoy the same bounties, it may well be that they have been given such merits which we are unaware of and on account of which their rank is much higher in Allāh's sight – then after these two points of contemplation, the joy and happiness which remains in you will not be considered to be self-conceit. It will either be natural joy, which is not blameworthy, or it will be gratitude when you are conscious of the favour of the true Benefactor, for which you will be rewarded."

20. Firmness In Treating Evils

In reply to a question, Hadrat Wālā wrote the signs of firmness in treating evils: "Firmness is when there is no heedlessness and disregard, and no laxity in one's determination and courage."

In reply to another question which was in Persian, Hadrat Wālā described how firmness can be acquired. He wrote: "It requires regular revision, presence of mind, to make it a constant routine, and to compensate for any weakness with a self-imposed penalty like a physical or monetary act of worship. For example, spending some wealth which is some what difficult on the individual or performing a reasonable amount of optional salāhs which are to a certain extent difficult on the self. The sign of stability and firmness will be that one does not find any difficulty in executing all that is required."

21. Unwitting Conditions In The Path Of Sufism

A seeker wrote: I had love for Hadrat before pledging bayʿah, but I perceived some awe. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* after pledging bayʿah my love has increased tremendously, but I do not perceive any awe at all.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is a blessed condition. The first condition was also blessed. All unwitting conditions in this path are absolutely good which have countless benefits and wisdoms. They may not be understood at present, but as you proceed, they will be understood automatically."

22. A Treatment For Thoughts In Salāh

A novice seeker complained about an inundation of thoughts in salāh and requested a treatment.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You yourself must focus on the words and different forms of dhikr. Thereafter if any thoughts enter your mind, they are not harmful. If you lose your focus, renew it and do not feel sorrow over losing your focus."

23. Rational Love And Natural Love

A seeker wrote: Nowadays my love for you is so overwhelming that it seems as if I have no love for anyone apart from you. I do not even think of any other person. In other words, I perceive a decrease in my love for even Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Your misgiving is incorrect. There is more rationality in love for Allāh *taʿālā* while more naturalness in love for one's fellow people. When observed on the surface, rational love appears to be weak and dimmed before natural love. This is what causes a misgiving and doubt, whereas the opposite holds true. Therefore, if through this natural love – Allāh forbid – a person does or says something against Allāh *taʿālā*, that same beloved will become abhorred. This proves that the love of Allāh *taʿālā* is prevailing and overwhelming."

24. Evil Glances

In reply to a seeker's question on evil glances, Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no treatment apart from determination and courage for it."

25. Passionate Love

A seeker developed passionate love for one of his students. He asked: Is there any way that I could continue teaching him while having this love for him to dissipate at the same time.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "I do not know any such treatment. [Hadrat Wālā then quoted the following couplet]:

> You tied me to a slab and placed me in the bottom of the ocean. You are then saying to me: Beware, you do not become wet.

26. Pride Over One's Recitation In Salāh

A seeker wrote: I recite lengthy sūrahs in salāh because people insist on it. Sometimes, after having completed the salāh, I feel very happy over the fact that I read very beautifully. But in my heart I think to myself that this is not my own achievement; it is solely a gift from Allāh *taʿālā*. Is this enough for the rectification of my self?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "From the prescribed sūrahs[1] which are to be recited in salāh, read those which are short; and do not read with too much of zeal. This will be a practical rectification of your situation. Your own verbal rectification [which you described] is not enough."

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[1] Hadrat Wālā is referring to the sūrahs which are preferable to read in the different compulsory salāhs. (translator)

27. Tranquillity Is Not The Objective, Action Is

A widow wrote: Although one and half years have passed since the demise of my husband, I am extremely restless. I do my utmost to direct my heart towards Allāh *taʿālā* but I cannot develop any concentration. It is my earnest desire to be able to worship Allāh *taʿālā* with full concentration accompanied with genuine patience and acceptance of Allāh's decree.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Absolute and total tranquillity is not the objective; action is – both external and internal. You know the external [physical] actions. As for the internal, the objective is what is within your control, e.g. patience. Tranquillity and concentration are not within your control, so they are not the objectives."

28. Backbiting

On the question of a seeker Hadrat Wālā described the following treatment for backbiting:

a) Be conscious of the punishment at the time when you are backbiting.

b) Ponder carefully before you start speaking.

c) Seek pardon [from the person] after backbiting.

d) Impose a fine upon yourself, either a cash payment or performing optional acts of worship.

The same seeker wrote a few days later: "This treatment has not embedded itself completely." Hadrat Wālā replied: "It will become embedded gradually; you must continue adhering to it."

29. Councillor In A Municipality

Some people forcefully nominated one of Hadrat Wālā's khalīfah's as a councillor in a municipality. The khalīfah was terrified by this and eventually decided to consult his shaykh. He wrote to Hadrat Wālā: Hadrat, please write something in this regard so that I may attain salvation.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "As long as the connection with the Creator is not firm, unnecessary connection with the creation is most harmful. As for the benefit one envisages from serving the creation because one feels that one is serving Allāh's

creation, this right can only be fulfilled when the connection with the Creator is strong. If not, neither the right of the Creator is fulfilled nor of the creation. This has been experienced by not just one but thousands of people of insight. More firm and steadfast people than yourself and myself gave up such connections. The stories of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Adham Balkhī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Shāh Shujāʿ *rahimahullāh* are well known. We should not apply ourselves to the Khulafā' Rāshidīn."

30. Changing Conditions

A seeker wrote about his changing conditions. Hadrat Wālā replied: "I pray for you with all my heart. The elders say the following with regard to changing conditions:

> Drink one or two glasses in the assembly of enjoyment and leave. In other words, do not aspire eternal union."

31. The Illness Of Looking At Beauty

A seeker wrote about his illness of looking at beauty. As is his norm, Hadrat Wālā asked: "Is the looking at beauty within your control or not?" The seeker replied: "It is within my control but using my control to abstain from it appears difficult." Hadrat Wālā wrote as a warning: "What is so difficult? Does a person fall ill by restraining his self? Does he run out of breath? Or does he encounter any other unbearable discomfort?"

32. The Limits Of Giving Up Occupations And Interactions

A seeker wrote: I feel like selling my village, handing over the affairs of farming to someone else, cutting off all interactions with people, and spending my time in good deeds.

Hadrat Wālā asked: "Is your village, farm land and other occupations preventing you from good deeds?"

The seeker also wrote: "My mother is opposed to it but Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says: "Remain aloof and act against your mother's advice."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "What, then, is the meaning of the following verse?

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّذُرِّيَّةً

We had sent many Messengers before you and We had given them wives and children.[1]

In short, it does not refer to every connection and every condition. Whatever you do, think and ponder over it carefully before embarking on it."

33. The Limits Of Politeness

A seeker wrote: I am extremely and intensely polite. Sometimes this causes me to even do things which are against the Sharīʿah. The mere thought that I should not hurt the feelings of anyone makes it really difficult for me to refuse.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Finding it difficult does not mean it is beyond your control. Where politeness does not entail going against the Sharīʿah, it will be permissible to practise on it. But where it is against the Sharīʿah, it will be unlawful. Even though it may be difficult and inconvenient, you will have to bear the difficulty. There is no other treatment for it."

34. The Conditions Of A Seeker

Several parts of a seeker's letter together with Hadrat Wālā's replies are quoted below. It contains many benefits.

Condition: I am able to carry out the subservient spiritual practices but the condition of my heart is the same.

Reply: Is it not a bounty that you are receiving two meals and your health is good, even though you may not be progressing!?

Condition: I do not have any specific condition which I could describe to Hadrat.

Reply: This condition in itself was worthy of mention. Now that you informed me, I learnt something beneficial. But you will have to remember it.

Condition: Nor do I find myself worthy of describing any condition.

Reply: Belief in one's unworthiness in this path is really a sign of worthiness.

Condition: I consider myself to be absolutely nothing in this path.

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 38.

Reply: It is a blessed way of thinking.

Condition: The spiritual practices which I carry out are merely fulfilled out of habit.

Reply: Is the habit of doing good not a bounty?

Condition: Instead of engaging in loud dhikr, I engaged in silent dhikr for a few days because of some people who were sleeping nearby and also because I wanted to get rid off my tiredness. Is there anything wrong in doing this?

Reply: It is in fact more meritorious and more beneficial.

Condition: My final hours have drawn and I still consider myself to be a novice.

Reply: At least you are not sightless.

Condition: I do not see any way of success apart from coming and presenting myself before Hadrat.

Reply: Informing me of this is also a form of success.

35. Steadfastness In Abstaining From Sin

A seeker wrote: As per Hadrat Wālā's instruction, I have wilfully given up casting evil glances and evil thoughts. However, because of my weak heart, I find it difficult to remain steadfast all the time.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You must remain steadfast from your side and continue praying to Allāh *taʿālā* for steadfastness."

In the same letter the seeker asked for a treatment for salvation from desires of the self. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Tomorrow you must repent from eating unlawful food, and then ask me to pray that you get salvation from hunger." [in other words, both are impossible].

36. Lack Of Humbleness In Salāh Because Of The Intense Heat

A seeker complained: Because of the intense heat, I do not experience humbleness and concentration in salāh and other acts of worship. Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is a valid excuse."

37. The Combination Of Fear And Hope Is A Great Boon

A person penned detailed accounts of his conditions. Included among them was: Thoughts of Allāh *taʿālā* now enter the heart without hindrance and I experience indescribable joy in my

heart. However, what I would like to know is that in the presence of my shortcomings in good deeds, can I enjoy these bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* and Hadrat Wālā's unending blessings? Or are they mere figments of my imagination?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The combination of both possibilities in the heart is a great treasure. Its essence is [the Hadīth]: 'Īmān is suspended between fear and hope.' Congratulations to you."

38. Becoming Angry At One's Mother

A seeker wrote: My mother scolds and reprimands me for every single matter. I become angry at this and start fighting with her. Please treat my ailment.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The treatment for it is that you must not give any reply. Leave the room."

39. The Correct Manner Of Dhikr

A novice seeker wrote: I am living far from Hadrat. How can I engage in dhikr in the correct manner? Hadrat Wālā replied: "What is so difficult about it? Ensure that the heart and tongue join in the dhikr. This is the correct manner."

The same person also requested: Please ask such and such khalīfah of yours to demonstrate to me the method of the 12 tasbīhs.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no need for it. These restrictions [to the number of tasbīhs] are not the objectives. The sole objective is dhikr. If one person is travelling at an average speed and another at a fast speed, the two will still reach their destination. As for the actual speed, this contains additional benefits and wisdoms for which the actual destination is not dependent."

The same seeker also wrote: "I would like to learn the correct manner of dhikr so that I can start enjoying the fruits of it." Hadrat Wālā replied: "The essence of the fruits of dhikr is reward and proximity [to Allāh *taʿālā*]."

He also wrote about trying to acquire the *Laṯā'if Sittah*[1], to which Hadrat Wālā replied: "The *haqā'iq* (realities) are the objectives, not the *laṯā'if* (subtleties)."

40. Repulsing Useless Thoughts

A seeker wrote: My weak heart causes me to be inundated by various useless thoughts when I am performing tahajjud salāh and engaged in dhikr. I think to myself: Satan must not take a form and come before me. A jinn must not come and join me in my salāh. Hadrat Wālā replied: "In such a situation, thinking of your shaykh will repulse these worrisome thoughts. But don't consider your shaykh to be present and watching."

41. The Difference Between Pride And Bashfulness

A seeker wrote with regard to pride: I happened to go to a nearby market on one occasion. I don't ever have a need to engage in any buying and selling there. I had no need to go to the butcher, but I went although I did feel a bit shy.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Bashfulness is one thing and pride is something else. Bashfulness is essential shyness which is caused by doing something against one's habit. So much so that if a person is accorded respect in a manner which he is not used to, he will feel shy. For example, a person is made to sit on an elephant and 10-20 riders are made to follow him in a procession. [He will certainly feel shy]."

The seeker wrote back: "I will certainly feel shy but I do not trust myself in the least. It may well be that I do not perceive the shame although I cannot provide any proof for it."

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[1] The *Laṯā'if Sittah* are: (1) nafs, (2) qalb, (3) rūh, (4) sirr, (5) khafī, (6) akhfā.
The nourishment of the nafs is to constantly refrain from sin. The nourishment of the qalb is dhikr. The nourishment of the rūh is to realize the presence of Allāh *ta'ālā*. The nourishment of the sirr is the unravelling of mysteries (e.g. the incident of Mūsā *'alayhis salām* and Khidr *'alayhis salām*). The nourishment of khafī is annihilation (fanā'). The nourishment of akhfā is complete annihilation (fanā' al-fanā') to the extent that the seeker does not even know he is engaged in fanā' – like a person in a deep sleep does not know that he is sleeping, as opposed to a person who is just dozing off. (*Sharī'at Wa Tasawwuf*)

Hadrat Wālā replied: "As long as there is no proof to the contrary, the obvious and overwhelming feeling and emotion will be taken into consideration. If the heart wants to do its utmost in treating this condition, then do something which is not against the Sharī'ah, but at the same time it is against the norm and scorned by society."

42. Identifying Controllable And Uncontrollable Sins

A student who is under training wrote about his worries over certain incidents, complained about evil glances, requested for Hadrat Wālā's prayers and for an easy way of rectification. He added: "I have such an intense desire to look at everything of beauty that despite lowering my gaze, it rises up to look. As per Hadrat Wālā's instruction, I think about punishment, Hell, etc. but I feel so compelled that it seems very difficult to restrain myself. I feel as though someone is grasping the heart from within and prompting it. I am feeling very compelled by this evil."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "I have read every word of yours. A person is rewarded for uncontrollable calamities. I am also praying for their removal. However, there is neither reward for controllable sins nor can I pray for them because their removal is the action of the person himself. As an example, a prayer for this will be similar to saying: 'O Allāh! Such and such person has started eating such and such type of food. He must give up eating it and eat something else.' Such a prayer has no meaning. However, I can pray for inspiration, and that will only be possible if the doer gathers all the means. The greatest of the means are determination and courage. As for the excuse which you wrote in the underlined words, it is absolutely wrong. Just think: If at the time when your self is imposing on you to lift your gaze and look, and one of your elders is present and looking at how you are lifting your gaze, will you be able to commit such a shameless act? If you can, then you are untreatable. If you cannot, it shows that your gaze did not lift on its own, you are not compelled, it is not difficult for you to restrain yourself, nor is anyone prompting you. You are personally doing everything by yourself, and you are able to do the opposite as well. Your excuse is as lame as the prattling of a poet who said:

> I had lost control of myself when I kissed her. Pardon me my mistake. O sir! It was the fault of my restless heart and not my fault.

43. Remorse Over Unpunctuality On Spiritual Practices

A seeker who was a teacher expressed his intense remorse over his unpunctuality on spiritual practices because of his many teaching obligations. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Remorse is to a certain extent an alternative to punctuality when the unpunctuality is based on a valid reason."

44. Wishing For Unnecessary Items

A seeker wrote: Whenever I see a nice item by someone I think to myself: "It would be very good if I also owned such an item." I then make an effort to acquire it. I do not desire the removal of the item from the person who owns it, but merely to own it as well. This shows that I am greedy for this world. Kindly provide a treatment if my thoughts are correct.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You do not have an illness but there is a possibility of it conveying you to an illness. The treatment for it is that the moment you desire the item, you must make a firm intention that if you acquire such an item, you will immediately give it away as a gift especially to the person who has such an item from before, and if you are not so informal with him, you will give it to someone else. And if the item happened to be of use to you, then you will give its value to the poor. You must think to yourself: I will continue doing this for as long as my wish does not end. I am also praying for you."

The person wrote back and said that he benefited tremendously from this treatment and such thoughts do not cross his mind at all. If it does cross his mind occasionally, he thinks to himself that he will give it to a poor person, and his wish disappears completely. Hadrat Wālā congratulated him on this.

45. The Importance Of Deeds

A seeker wrote: Before and after performing salāh, dhikr, etc. the thought comes to my mind that it is useless for me to bear so many difficulties because I can never become a pious and righteous personality. As for the injunctions, there is no need

to bother too much about them because salvation is dependent on [Allāh's] mercy…

Hadrat Wālā replied: "One treatment is that you must think to yourself that good deeds are not solely for forgiveness. Rather, they are the rights of the Master over the slave, and forgiveness is a completely separate blessing.

46. The Desire For Excellence

A seeker described his condition, the essence of which is that he has this intense desire to have the best of this world and of Dīn, and that he must surpass everyone in every field.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You must be conscious of the worldly thing for which you have a desire so that you become aware of its insignificance and worthlessness. If it is detrimental to your Dīn as well, you must be conscious of its evil consequences. By resorting to this meditation repeatedly, your desire will wane. But if it is for a Dīnī matter, then such a desire is praiseworthy. There is no need to treat it. However, the condition is that you must not desire the removal of the bounty from the person who has it, or else it will amount to jealousy which is unlawful. If – Allāh forbid – you experience this, you must ask a separate question. I am praying for a balance in your desires."

47. A Condition For Dīnī Benefit

A khalīfah wrote: I have a lot of shyness and modesty in my temperament. My heart becomes quite disturbed by the respect and consideration which people accord to me. Through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā, a few people of a certain village benefited tremendously as regards Dīn. They send repeated requests to me to go to them. I feel quite ashamed to go so I excuse myself, but they do not accept my excuses. I will do whatever Hadrat Wālā advises in this regard.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You must continue going for as long as you feel shy. Stop going once your shyness disappears. When you feel shy again, you must start going to them again. Continue in this way."

48. Every Thought Is Not Ostentation

A seeker wrote: When I relate to anyone something which I read in Hadrat Wālā's *Mawā'iz*, I feel some sort of ostentation. I then

think to myself that what I am saying is in contradiction to my actions and that I am not qualified to lecture the person.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Every thought does not entail ostentation. Rather it refers to the thought whose basis is obtaining the approval of the creation by using Dīn as the means. This is a matter which is within one's control. When there is no such intention, it is certainly not ostentation even though it may be an assumption of ostentation. Assumption of ostentation is actually a whispering of ostentation for which one is not taken to task. A good deed must not be discarded for such an assumption."

Another seeker wrote with reference to ostentation: Sometimes I am occupied in a good deed when my eyes suddenly fall on someone. In most of these cases, I think to myself that I must fulfil that deed in a much better way. I am certain that this is ostentation, but when I think to myself that a person is worthless when he does something for show, I direct my intention solely to Allāh *taʿālā*. Will the ostentation remain if I redirect my attention to Allāh *taʿālā* in this manner?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "My personal inclination in this regard is that mere correction of intention is not enough because this correction is not the essential objective according to this person. His objective is to beautify a deed for the creation while the correction of the intention is the tool for this beautification. In this way, he feels he will be saved from any taint of ostentation while the objective of his self is also achieved. Therefore, the sincerity which is used for the acquisition of ostentation is ostentation in itself because it is the prelude to ostentation. In such a case, the only way to safeguard one's self from ostentation is that after perceiving this fear [of ostentation], he must not alter his deed in any way and keep his intention pure at the same time. I do not know what the other spiritual doctors have to say in this regard. Even if it is different from what I said, I remain on my opinion. When it comes to personal inclinations, the independent judgement of one is not a proof against the other."

Similarly, another seeker wrote: In the course of my sickness I have to perform salāh at home. The devotion which I used to have when performing salāh in the musjid was not found in my salāh at home. Moreover, my rakʿats in the musjid used to be long when compared to those at home. I am now thinking that

the extra devotion in my salāh at the musjid could well be on account of ostentation.

Hadrat Wālā replied: “That is not the case. Instead, there are several factors which are found in combination in a musjid which are not found in one’s house.”

49. Smiling While In Fear

Hadrat Wālā wrote in reply to one objection: “A natural smile can form even while in fear. This is similar to natural hunger, thirst and sleepiness when one is overcome by fear.”

50. Acting On Thoughts

Hadrat Wālā replied to the conditions of a particular seeker: “If an inspiration is in line with the Sharīʿah, it can be acted on if it is done with the intention of practising on the Sharīʿah, and not with the intention of acting on the inspiration. Acting on thoughts is most dangerous for novices.”

51. Evil Thoughts

On the request of a seeker, Hadrat Wālā wrote the following treatment for evil thoughts: “When such an evil thought enters the heart, sit down aloof from everyone and think to yourself: ‘Allāh *taʿālā* prohibited us from evil thoughts. I have therefore committed a sin. There is the possibility of punishment for committing a sin. O my self! How are you going to bear Allāh’s punishment?’ After thinking in this way, repent and pray to Allāh *taʿālā* by saying: ‘O Allāh! Cleanse my heart.’ Also pray for the person about whom you had evil thoughts. Say: ‘O Allāh! Confer him with bounties in both worlds.’ Do this three times in the day and night. If you still experience the effect of evil thoughts, repeat the procedure for a second and third day. If the effect still remains, go up to the person and say: ‘I had evil thoughts about you without any real reason. I ask you to pardon me and to pray that these evil thoughts are removed.’”

52. Ups And Downs In Spiritual Conditions

A seeker complained about a decrease in his spiritual condition. Hadrat Wālā replied: “Such increases and decreases are essential and normal. A condition cannot remain constant. There can be continuity in actions but not in conditions. Such a change is not harmful. Rather, there are wisdoms behind it. They are witnessed by the people on the path themselves. For

example, more enjoyment in the presence of Allāh *taʿālā* after having committed the sin of backbiting, humbleness and remorse overtaking a person after backbiting, observing one's own incapability, and so on."

53. Concentration In Salāh

On the request of a seeker, Hadrat Wālā wrote the following procedure to acquire concentration in salāh: "Direct your attention to one side when you are in salāh. This is the form which it should take: When you are in the standing position, do not think about the bowing posture which is to follow. When you are bowing, do not think about the short standing posture which is to follow, apply the same rule for each of the postures. Consider each posture to be the objective when you are in each of them. Remain focused in this way. If you continue this until the end of the salāh, you will experience concentration which you never experienced even when engaged in dhikr. There is concentration in dhikr but there is always the apprehension that someone will come, disturb you and remove your concentration. Or, you yourself may stop the dhikr and become occupied with some other task. On the contrary, when you are in salāh, you are safe with the belief that as long as you do not complete your salāh, no one can come and divert your attention to him, nor can you yourself do something on your own. What I just wrote came into my heart in the fard of zuhr salāh, I experienced it in that salāh and in the Sunnah salāh after it. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*."

54. Futile Talk

A seeker requested a treatment for futile talk.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Is the futile talk controllable or uncontrollable?"

The seeker wrote back: "I have fully realized that it is controllable and not only this, but all orders and prohibitions are within one's control. However, it will be a great favour on Hadrat's part if he teaches me something which would make it easier for me."

Hadrat Wālā: "For what thing are you going to ask ease and what will you say about the following Hadīth: 'Paradise is surrounded by hardships'?"

55. How To Realize One's Objective

Hadrat Wālā replied to a seeker who had expressed his worthlessness in a letter: "The objective is to see and witness one's objective, and the way to realize it is to strive. But as long as there is a deficiency in it, the prelude to witnessing the objective is witnessing the absence of striving. Once a person realizes he is not striving, he will – Allāh willing – be inspired to strive. He then realizes his objective. This is the sequence which has to be followed. Allāh willing, once it is followed, the objective will be realized gradually. However, you have to continue persevering. If you display any shortcoming, you must be observant over your lack of perseverance – Allāh willing – you will not be deprived. I am also praying for you."

56. The Meaning Of Considering One's Self To Be Lower Than Others

A seeker wrote: Hadrat, if a person really possesses certain Allāh-bestowed merits, how can he think to himself that he does not possess them and consider himself to be lower than others?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is permissible for a person to consider himself to be more perfect, but it is not permissible for him to consider himself to be superior in the sense that he considers himself to be accepted in Allāh's court and the other to be rejected. It may well be that he has a certain good deed which is more beloved than the other's, while the person himself has a certain evil trait which is more disliked by Allāh *taʿālā* than all the misdeeds of the other. Or, this may not be the case at present but is going to happen in the future. Being conscious of these two possibilities is a sufficient treatment. Man is not accountable for anything more."

57. Regret Over Missing A Salāh

A seeker wrote: Previously when I used to miss the fajr salāh I used to cry a lot. But now when I miss it, I do not have any remorse. Hadrat Wālā, I perceive a blackness on my heart. Please correct me. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Natural regret is not the objective, rational regret is; and you have it. Therefore, your sorrow over the absence of regret is as rational regret."

58. Concentration In Salāh

A seeker wrote about his difficulties in having concentration in salāh. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Just as it is harmful to keep the self too free, it also becomes vexed by excessive restraint. This much attention in salāh is enough where a person knows a sūrah by heart and is able to read it from memory. There is no need for anything more. If this is accompanied by whisperings, there is no harm whatsoever in them."

A scholar who was also Hadrat Wālā's khalīfah asked: Is concentration in salāh negated by intentionally thinking of some other issue related to the Sharī'ah or to intentionally plan a lawful journey while in salāh?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is an intricate issue. I will present the rules in this regard. Two Ahādīth are presently before me. One of them is a *marfū'* Hadīth in which the following words are mentioned:

صلى ركعتين مقبلا عليهما بقلبه

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam *performed two rak'ats of salāh with his heart focussed on them.*

The other is a *mauqūf* Hadīth containing a statement of Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* in which he says:

إني لأجهز جيشي وأنا في الصلوة

I make preparations for my army while I am in salāh.

If we look at both narrations collectively, we deduce two levels of devotion. One is that when a person is occupied in a certain act of worship, he does not wittingly think of any other act even if the latter is an act of obedience. The second level is that he thinks of the other act of obedience, but both acts are such that the second act of obedience is not intended to be fulfilled through the first one. For example, his purpose of performing salāh is not to have a devoted time wherein he can prepare an army without any disturbance. The essence of devotion is equally found in both, there is no doubt about it. Certain impediments or factors caused a difference. The first level is more perfect, and the second level – if done without a valid reason – is less perfect. If there is a valid reason for it, it will also be perfect – as was the case with Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu*

ʿanhu. The criterion for this is Ijtihād, but this is not completely against devotion in every situation. However, as to whether it is against devotion in salāh or not, this is a natural matter. I am inclined to think that in the case where there is a valid excuse, it is also not against devotion in salāh. If necessary, you can apply your question to the above explanation."

Similarly, another seeker complained about an absence of devotion and humility while leading the people in the tarāwīh salāh. He said: "In each rakʿat I make a firm intention of turning my attention to Allāh *taʿālā* with humility and servitude but once I start reading the Qur'ān, I continue reading until the end of my recitation with this in mind that I must not make any mistake. I become very saddened by this. Please pray for this desire of mine to be fulfilled."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Devotion means tranquillity. Your concern about not forgetting [what you have to read in the tarāwīh salāh] is a motion which is against tranquillity. And two opposites cannot combine. Your concern [about not forgetting] is naturally essential, so devotion in such a condition is generally not possible. Paying particular attention to acquiring it amounts to imposing the impossible on one's self. However, the absence of this devotion is neither harmful nor regrettable because the purpose of devotion – i.e. one must not be focussed on anything which is not the objective – is acquired. Thus, although devotion may not appear to be there in form, its meaning is acquired because your concern is a perfection in obedience which is the objective. Your focus is therefore on the objective. Consequently, some Ahādīth on devotion in salāh contain the words:

لم يحدث فيها نفسه بشيء من الدنيا

As long as he does not occupy himself in salāh with anything of this world.

Other Ahādīth contain the words:

إلا بخير

As long as he only thinks of good things.

An explanation of this can be found in my book, *at-Tasharruf*, in the chapter on salāh. It is worth studying. Yes, the natural dissatisfaction which you are experiencing is similar to

istighfār for cloudiness of the heart (i.e. some sort of distraction).

The above investigation is from among the great favours of Allāh *taʿālā*. It has nothing to do with my personal achievements. It should therefore not be disregarded. I too was experiencing the same concern as yourself. Allāh *taʿālā* exposed the reality to me. Now it is left to one's own courage."

Similarly, a student requested such a treatment whereby focus on Allāh *taʿālā* remains forever. Hadrat Wālā replied: "The focus which is on the level of action is within one's control. The treatment for it is determination and consciousness. As for the focus which is on the level of a spiritual condition, it is acquired automatically through the previously mentioned level."

59. The Sun Of Merits For The Obliteration Of Evils

A seeker wrote many details and subsidiary points on the subject of pride, and then requested: "If there is pride in me, kindly provide a treatment for it." Hadrat Wālā penned a detailed reply. He also gave it a title in line with the questioner's name, viz. *Shams al-Fadā'il li Tams ar-Radhā'il* (the sun of merits for the obliteration of evils). The reply is quoted below:

There are several similar points which could cause confusion. Pride, conceit, authority, ostentation and a sense of shame. Then each of these can be divided into two levels, viz. the reality and the form. This totals ten points. A lengthy discussion could ensue on each of them. However, I will pen a concise account through which any person possessing a slight affinity with the subject will be able to understand each of these levels. He will then be able to apply subsidiary incidents to them. As for the one who does not even possess the necessary affinity, neither will the general principles nor the details suffice him. Rather, when he experiences any incident, it will be necessary for him to present it before a master. If there is a need for clarification, he must provide it to him. He must then accept whatever decision he passes, both in letter and practice.

The essence of pride is that because of a certain worldly or Dīnī excellence, a person wilfully considers himself greater than others, and the latter to be below him. There will be two parts

to this: considering one's self greater than others, looking down on others. So the reality of it is unlawful and a sin. As for its form, it encompasses all parts except one, viz. one's choice. In other words, thoughts of these parts came into his mind unwittingly. There is no sin up to this point. However, if after this he wilfully considers this thought [of superiority] to be good, or, although he did not consider it to be good, he continued with such thoughts, then this will become the reality of pride and it will be a sin. As for the condition of considering others to be below one, this has been brought because if a person really believes in greatness and smallness without scorning others, then it is not pride.

For example, a twenty year old man considers a two year old child to be beneath him in age, a student in a fifth year class considers a student in the first year class to be below him in studies, a wealthy man considers a poor man to be less than him in wealth. However, in all these cases, each one does not look down on the other with scorn, then this is not pride. But if such differences are not factual, then such a belief will be a lie but pride is dissimilar. Although belief in such greatness and smallness is not pride, if it is a cause of differences either in practice or honour, this belief can convey one towards pride. Therefore, in order to stop this from happening, the same treatment which is described for real pride will have to be followed. One of the treatments is a special meditation which has to be renewed and repeated whenever one thinks of such differences in rank. The meditation is as follows:

1. Although I possess this excellence, I did not acquire it by myself. Rather, it was given to me by Allāh *taʿālā*.
2. Furthermore, I did not receive it from Him because I deserved it. Rather it was solely His bestowal and mercy.
3. Even after I received it, I cannot guarantee its continuation. Rather, Allāh *taʿālā* can snatch it away whenever He wills.
4. Although the other person does not possess this excellence at present, it may well be that he receives a greater portion of it than myself in the future and I myself become in need of him for its acquisition.
5. Even if he does not acquire it in the future – as is sometimes envisaged from external means – he may, at

present, possess a certain excellence which is concealed from me but known to others, or concealed from everyone but known to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. Based on this, his collective qualities may be more perfect than my own collective qualities. Even if the perfection of anyone does not come to mind, I ought to bring this possibility in my mind that he may be an accepted servant in Allāh's knowledge while I am not. Or, even if I am accepted, he may be more accepted than myself. What right, then, do I have to scorn him?

6. Assuming he is below me in all matters, then a deficient person enjoys a right over a perfect person, like the right of a sick person over a healthy one, the right of a weak person over a strong one and the right of a poor man over a wealthy man. So I ought to be kind and affectionate towards him. I ought to strive for his perfection. If I do not have the power, determination or the time, I should at least pray for his perfection. After thinking in this way, I must make efforts for his perfection. In this way, a relationship of kindness will develop with him. A natural consequence of striving for the perfection and training for another is the development of love for him. And after love, there is no scorn.
7. If you cannot even do this much, you must occasionally engage him in casual and mannerly discussions, ask him about his well-being and so on. This will develop a bond between the two. Scorn disappears after the realization of such a bond. However, if the person is such that the Sharīʿah requires you to dislike him, then some of the above listed procedures will not be followed. However, some of them can still be included in others, so adopt them.

This entire discussion was on the subject of pride. Self-conceit differs from pride in just one aspect, all the rest are the same as pride. The one aspect is that the person does not consider others to be below him, he only considers himself to be great. The levels related to the reality and the form are the same as for pride, and from the above mentioned prescription, those that are not connected to others will apply here.

From the above-listed five evils, the third is “love for authority, love for name and fame”. The essence of it is that just as a person considers himself to be great, he wants others to consider him in the same way, they must look up to him, obey him and serve him. Since it stems from pride or self conceit, its categories, injunctions, levels and treatments are the same as for pride.

The fourth is ostentation. Its essence is to use knowledge – worldly or Dīnī – as a means to acquire greatness in the eyes of people. The other evils did not contain the condition of “using them as a means”. Ostentation also stems from pride and conceit, therefore its categories, injunctions, levels and treatments are the same.

Sometimes, due to certain peculiar situations, a few new forms come to the fore or new treatments are needed. These can be identified by obtaining the view of one’s mentor.

The last of the five is known as a “sense of shame”. It is a natural retraction which is experienced by the self when a person does something which is contrary to his habit or experiences something contrary to the norm. Due to his extreme caution, a seeker sometimes confuses it with pride although it is not really pride. The criterion to gauge it is to see: A person shies away from or shuns doing a menial or despicable job. We will now have to see whether he retracts in the same way when someone sincerely accords him a very high level of respect and honour. If he responds in the same way, it is a “sense of shame”; if he does not, it is pride.

This is its essence which, because it is uncontrollable, is not blameworthy. The other is its form. It is pride in reality but the self finds some way of explaining to him that it is in fact shame and pacifies him in this way. It is blameworthy because it is controllable. In fact, it is more reprehensible than the other above-listed evils because by looking for a loophole, he made an unlawful quality lawful. This is the worst level of interpolation and deceit. Thus, we see that in the other evils, the reality was blameworthy but not the form, but here it is the opposite, as proven above. Since all eight incidents contain all parts of all the categories, I investigated and discussed all the categories (the seeker had mentioned eight examples of pride in his letter for which he wanted an answer).

Finally, I will describe a lengthy treatment. The previously mentioned treatments were temporary, so their effects cannot be permanent except in rare cases. A novice requires a lengthy period of treatment. The treatment is this: He must opt for informal appearances, ways and habits of simple minded people until humility is firmly embedded in him. However, he must be careful not to adopt the lowest levels of despicability and ignobility which could cause his humility to become well-known.

The same seeker then asked for details about the appearances, ways and habits of simple minded people.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "How can all details in this regard be encompassed!? The gist is to adopt such ways which, while causing some retraction to the self, are not worthy of consideration and attention by others, which could cause one's humility to become well-known.

60. Distress

A seeker wrote: I have one illness: If anyone causes me any hardship and loss, I cannot rest at ease until I exact revenge from that person.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The absence of peace is not a sin, it is merely a distress. Bearing it entails striving and is a cause of reward. Thus, the absence of peace is not harmful but beneficial. As for a treatment for your distress, this is not the job of a teacher of Dīn [like myself], but I will voluntarily write something about it. By bearing it for a few days, it will become your habit and you will not experience such distress in the future."

61. The Purpose Of Love For Friends And Relatives

A seeker wrote: "The relationship which I previously had with my relatives is no longer existent." He expressed his sorrow over this and added: "This appears to be against the Sunnah."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Your entire condition is okay, this Sunnah is not the essential objective. The essential objective is to fulfil their rights, and this you are doing. The disposition of some people is such that if they were to give importance to this Sunnah, they will miss out the actual obligation of having a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. The condition which you are

experiencing is more beneficial and more sensible for such people."

62. Inability To Bear One's Own Humiliation

A seeker wrote: I do not consider myself greater than anyone, but I cannot tolerate being humiliated in any way. I certainly do not want anyone to respect and honour me, I definitely do not want them to consider me to be great, but at the same time they must not humiliate me in any way. I even feel ashamed to wear dirty clothes because those who look at me may consider me despicable.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is in fact the order of the Sharī'ah. A Hadīth states: 'A believer should not disgrace himself.' This is the way to follow as long as the condition is not overwhelming. If it is overwhelming, it considers humiliation to be more beloved than honour, but this is not within one's control. Do not hope for it if you do not have it. If you have it, do not remove it."

63. Greed For Food

A seeker wrote: I have, since a long time, an intense greed for food and eating excessively. This is considered to be the root of all sins in *Tablīgh Dīn* (name of a book).

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The strong one's in the past used to suffer from this illness [of excessive desire for food]. But nowadays, people's powers have themselves diminished. Thus merely reducing one's food intake is enough. This illness no longer exists."

Similarly, Hadrat Wālā wrote to another seeker: "Eating less is not the objective in itself. The objective is to break one's animalistic powers, whose purpose is to restrain the self from sin. Thus, if abstaining from sins can be acquired without eating less, then there is no need to reduce one's food intake. In fact, in most cases today, eating less causes weakness. This results in other physical and psychological harms. Therefore, it is not good to eat less unnecessarily."

64. The Conditions Of Retraction And Expansion

A seeker, in a lengthy letter, described his conflicting conditions. First he experienced severe unbearable worry and

stress causing him to lose all rest and sleep. This was followed by the joy of good dreams.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The first condition was of retraction and the second of expansion. The stronger the retraction, the more intense the expansion. This is why the spiritual masters state that a person should not become worried by retraction because it is a prelude to expansion. Congratulations! These conditions are experienced by few people. When experiencing these conditions, a person must have light meals, and it is essential for him to eat fortifying foods even if he does not feel like it."

65. Worry Over Fear

A seeker wrote: I become worried over the slightest fears. It seems I do not have the quality of reliance in Allāh *taʿālā*. Kindly provide a treatment for this sin.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is neither a sin nor is it against reliance. The essence of reliance is for a person to turn his gaze away from those who are not the real doers [because the real doer is only Allāh *taʿālā*]. This turning away is doctrinally compulsory. And in practice, it is desirable for a person to abstain from assumed causes provided he is able to bear this. As for the causes which are generally certain or similar to being certain, it is sinful to give them up – except for those experiencing special spiritual conditions because they are permitted to give them up even in the latter case. All this applies to worldly causes. Abandoning Dīnī causes does not entail reliance."

66. The Illness Of Doubts

A seeker wrote: I am habitually in doubt. When I hear an objection from opponents or read something along these lines in a book, I become doubtful. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, it does not cause any difference to my actions, but I do not have the same previous interest in my acts of worship. My heart feels depressed and dark. At the same time, I consider this doubt to be evil and disliked.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Do not look at things which could cause you doubts. As for the statements which fall into your ears unwittingly and cause these doubts to you, there is no need to remove them through any special procedures. If you pay attention to them, your distress will increase and it will become

an illness by itself. So instead of adopting any measures and procedures, you must turn a blind eye to them. No matter how much the whisperings vex you, do not bother in the least. Instead, continue praying and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā*, and consider this to be sufficient. Allāh willing, your mind will become clear very quickly. Once this becomes your habit, your heart will become strong enough to the extent of not being affected by such things. This is a special prescription which, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I received a few days ago. It is a treasure of knowledge. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*."

67. Two Levels Of Miserliness

Hadrat Wālā wrote in response to a question of a seeker: "There are two levels of miserliness: (1) One which is against the demands of the Sharīʿah. This level is sinful. (2) One which is against the demands of integrity. This level is not sinful. Excellence demands that the latter level also not be found in a person. The manner of removing it is to act against its demands. But if one does not have the determination to do this, there is nothing to be worried about."

68. The Cause And Treatment For Heedlessness

A seeker wrote: I had set aside a short time for dhikr but could not remain punctual on even this much. Also, most of the time I end up missing one or two rakʿats of the congregational salāh. When this happens, I make a firm intention of being more cautious in the future. But then, no matter what worldly or Dīnī engagement I am occupied in, I become heedless of leaving it aside and hastening to the congregational salāh.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Physical weakness is the cause. This has a natural effect on your will and determination. To a certain extent, this is not within one's control. However, it is Allāh's favour on you that you are conscious of your weakness. You must remain this way. Allāh willing, through the blessings of your concern, you will reach the aspired and required level. This condition is experienced a lot by weak people both in essence and in obtaining rewards."

69. Futile Talks

A seeker wrote about suffering from the illness of futile talks. He wrote the reason for it: When I am happy or do not have any worry, I become over-excited and speak excessively, leading to

obscenities and backbiting. My excitement does not wane until I resort to obscenities and backbiting.

H̲ad̲rat Wālā wrote the following treatment: The essence of a treatment is to remove the cause of the illness. Since the cause of your illness is over-happiness, the treatment would be to remove that excitement, and to overpower that happiness with its opposite, i.e. worry and sorrow. The thing which can cause the most worry and sorrow is death and the events which will take place after death, viz. what will happen in the grave, on the day of Resurrection, the bridge over Hell and the different types of punishments for different sins. So when you experience this joy, you must make yourself aware of those events. If your awareness in this regard is weak, you must read a book which deals with this subject. It would be best to go into solitude immediately and resort to meditation or reading such a book. This will be an immediate treatment. Thereafter, if due to weakness in your disposition, you are overwhelmed by fear [of the different punishments], you must think of those Ah̲ādīth which contain themes of mercy and hope. In this way, a balance will be realized and the essential joy which is commanded will remain:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا

Say: By the grace of Allāh and His beneficence – in this, then, they should rejoice.[1]

In this way, the futile and additional portions of rejoicing will disappear. These are the portions which are prohibited:

لَا تَفْرَحْ اِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِيْنَ

Do not be conceited. Allāh does not like those who are conceited.[2]

70. Whisperings In S̲alāh

A seeker wrote: Although I constantly try to remain focussed in s̲alāh, I am inundated with whisperings.

H̲ad̲rat Wālā replied: "A person is only accountable for what is within his control. What is within his control is that he must

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 58.
[2] Sūrah al-Qas̲as̲: 28: 76.

not bring any thought wittingly into his mind. If it comes unintentionally and unwittingly, he must repulse it. An easy way of repulsing it is to turn his attention to something else which is related to worship. This can take many forms.

(1) Turn your attention to Allāh *taʿālā* – this could either be in the form of picturing Him or some sort of attestation, e.g. Allāh *taʿālā* is watching me. (2) Think that the accounting of deeds which is to come later on has already started, I am standing right in front of Allāh *taʿālā* for the reckoning, and I am asked to present a worship which I was asked to carry out. If it was liked, it will be considered in my account. (3) Think to yourself that this is your last and final salāh, your life will probably end after it and you will never be able to perform a salāh again. (4) The Kaʿbah is in front of me, the blessings and manifestations of Allāh are descending on it, and some of them are coming to me. The better my salāh, the more the blessings and manifestations will come to me. (5) Turn your focus to the words which are emanating from your mouth, this is irrespective of whether you think of their meanings or not. An easy way to realize this focus is not to read the words merely from memory but with a special will and intent. (6) Think of a spiritual master or any other similar thing.

The unintentional whisperings will be repulsed when these measures are adopted. In the beginning, as long as you do not practise on the above, these imaginations will disappear and the whisperings will return. The treatment for this is that the moment you realize it, you must renew your focus. Gradually you will find that focus and attention in acts of worship will become firmly embedded. Do not be vexed if there is any delay in this firmness. Rather, continue adopting the above measures because you are not accountable for firmness but for your action. Even if your entire life passes without realizing the firmness, there will be no defect in your objective. There will be no defect whatsoever in your worship, reward and proximity.”

71. Backbiting

Hadrat Wālā replied to a seeker as follows: “When you utter anything negative about anyone in an assembly, you must immediately follow it by speaking about his good qualities. After all, he will certainly have certain good qualities.”

72. Inconstancy

A seeker complained about an absence of constancy. Hadrat Wālā replied: "The treatment is with its opposite. Initially the opposite is difficult, then it becomes a habit and then becomes firmly embedded. The self dislikes imposition, and this is the secret behind the absence of constancy. If the self can bear the burden of imposition, there can be no reason for inconstancy. This is the treatment for it."

73. Natural Love For Wealth

A seeker noted some of the effects of love for wealth and asked: Is there any sin or harm in this?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* there is neither any harm in it nor any sin. All that you listed are certainly the effects of love for wealth but it is natural love, and therefore not blameworthy. It is not doctrinal or rational love, both of which are blameworthy. When Persia was conquered and all the booty was laid before Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, he made this prayer: O Allāh! You said:

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ ...الآية (جعل رضي الله عنه المزين هو الله تعالى، وهو أحد وجوه الآية)

The love of desirable things has deluded the people…[1]

Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* made Allāh *taʿālā* one of the beautifiers [of these items], and this is one of the explanations of this verse.

In other words, since You created this love, it is natural. We are not requesting its removal because dispositions do not change. However, we request You to direct this love in Your love, they must become the causes of Your obedience and not obstacles to Your obedience because this will prevent the dispositions from being utilized in their correct places. This is the required balance for such love. (In this way, he also made reference to his own weakness and the wisdom behind the creation of wealth).

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another verse:

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 14.

قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ اٰبَاءَكُمْ وَاَبْنَاءَكُمْ ...إلى قوله تعالى: اَحَبَّ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ (علق الوعيد بالأحبية لا بالحب)

Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your family, the wealth which you have acquired, the business whose closure you fear, and the homes which you love are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger…[1]

Here, Allāh *taʿālā* connects the warning to "more beloved" and not to mere love. However, there are times when the effects of this natural love become absorbed towards certain disasters. This can be remedied as you did. May knowledge and practice be with you. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

74. Why The Need For A Shaykh And Doctor?

A seeker wrote the following objection: The orders and prohibitions of the Sharīʿah are within one's control, and it is gauged from Hadrat Wālā's writings that the treatment for all ailments is to abstain through one's own will. After having learnt this general principle, does the need for a shaykh and spiritual doctor remain?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "All orders and prohibitions are within one's control. Fulfilling orders and abstaining from prohibitions are also within one's control. However, some errors are committed in them. Sometimes the acquired is assumed to be not acquired, and sometimes the opposite happens.

For example, a person willed humility in his salāh and also acquired its essence, but at the same time, he was inundated by whisperings. This person considers the latter to be in conflict with humility, so he assumed that he did not acquire the humility. Alternatively, in the beginning of his salāh, the whisperings were unwitting but they were drawn towards becoming intentional. Based on his beginning state, he was deceived into thinking that his humility was still present whereas it had actually disappeared.

Sometimes a quality which is not firmly embedded is considered to be firmly embedded. For example, he perceived acceptance of Allāh's will in a few accidents and calamities so he assumed that this quality [of acceptance of Allāh's will] is

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 24.

now firmly embedded in him. Later he suffered a major calamity and he did not have that acceptance or that required level of acceptance. But he remained in that deception that it is still firmly embedded in him and that his acceptance has neither vanished nor is it weak.

The harm of considering what is not acquired to be acquired is that a person becomes broken-hearted and gives up attention to it. Then it really vanishes. The harm of the opposite [considering the acquired to be not acquired] is that the person pays no attention whatsoever to it and remains deprived.

Considering what is not firmly embedded to be firmly embedded has the same harm of showing no importance to perfecting one's self. Sometimes he makes the mistake of considering the acquired and firmly embedded to have vanished.

Another example: A person combats unlawful lust at a time when the effects of excessive dhikr where still in him. Therefore, the unlawful lust diminished to such an extent that he did not even turn any attention to it. Thereafter the effects of the dhikr waned, causing him to experience a natural inclination – although weak – towards his lust. He thinks to himself that all his efforts and striving went in vain, and that the unlawful lust has returned to him. He lost hope in the programme of rectification and then really became involved in immorality.

These are few examples of mistakes and their harms. If a person has a spiritual bond with someone and has confidence in him, and after informing him of his conditions, the mentor would understand the reality through his insight and experiences. He will inform the person of the pitfalls and the latter will be saved from those harms. Assuming a seeker, due to his intelligence and sound understanding, is able to fathom for himself, but because he is not experienced, he is not at peace. Restlessness and confusion are obstacles to the objective.

This is the fundamental duty of the shaykh, he is not responsible for anything more. However, he, out of his own contribution, renders one more service. In the acquisition of the objective or the prelude to the objective, and also in the removal of an evil or prelude to an evil, the seeker experiences

some hardship. Although repeated effort for its acquisition and the latter's removal, the hardship is eventually turned into ease, the shaykh – out of his own contribution – teaches the seeker certain procedures and methods through which there is no hardship from the very beginning.

This is a concise explanation to make you understand. However, the real need for a shaykh is witnessed when a person commences in the path, continually and strictly informs him of all minute conditions and follows his counsel and words of advice. This total emulation can only be realized when the seeker has full confidence in his shaykh and his bond with him is one of submission. At such a time, the seeker will physically perceive that generally it is not possible to reach one's goal without a shaykh, except in very rare cases. Furthermore, the need for a shaykh differs on the basis of differences in people's intelligence and capabilities. This is why the early peoples had a lesser need for it than what we have.

75. Action Without Firmness

A seeker wrote: I do not have any firmly embedded praiseworthy condition.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Do not pay any attention to firmness. The purpose of firmness is action, while the purpose of action is not firmness. If you continue with your actions without developing firmness, you have achieved your goal."

Similarly, another seeker asked for the manner in which conviction could be acquired. Hadrat Wālā replied: "First you must impose on yourself to practise. Conviction will develop through its blessings. There is no other way."

76. Desires Of The Self

A seeker asked for a treatment for the sins which are caused by desires of the self.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The treatment for it is to diligently study the biographies of the pious and righteous personalities. Go into solitude at certain times and ponder over the warnings and punishments which are mentioned for committing sins. Be conscious of them even when you experience whisperings of sinning. Allāh willing, the demands of the self will disappear. If you experience a slight inclination, combat it with courage and

determination. No method is enough without courage and determination."

77. Anger

Hadrat Wālā prescribed the following treatment for anger for a certain seeker: "Keep the person with whom you are angry away from you or you yourself keep away from him. Occupy yourself in some other task immediately."

Similarly, another seeker wanted to know how he could give up anger. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Make it a point of giving a gift – no matter how small – to the person with whom you are angry."

Hadrat Wālā instructed another seeker to make up for his anger as follows: "If you become unnecessarily and unreasonably angry, you must miss two meals."

Similarly, Hadrat Wālā instructed another seeker to make up for his anger as follows: "When you become angry with a person and your anger subsides, you must clasp his hands in the presence of others, touch his feet, and so on. In fact, you should place his shoes on your head. Your self will come to its senses when you do this a few times."

Note: The highest level of treatment is the last one. But if a person does not have the courage to do that, the other two treatments will – Allāh willing – be sufficient.

78. The Soul Of The Path

A seeker who was a scholar wrote with much remorse: "From all the attendants of Hadrat Wālā, I am probably the only one who, let alone reaching Allāh *taʿālā*, did not even fathom the reality."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* you know what the objective is, viz. the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā*. Now two things remain, knowledge of the path and practising on it. The path is only one, i.e. adhering strictly to the external and internal injunctions. Two things are laid down in this path: (1) Dhikr as much as one can, which you have already commenced and which is included in this general principle. (2) Companionship of the people of Allāh *taʿālā* for as long as possible. If there isn't sufficient time for this, the alternative to it is to study and read the books containing the biographies, conditions and statements of the spiritual masters. There are

two obstacles in the path: (1) Sins. (2) Occupation in futile activities. There is one prerequisite for all this to be beneficial, viz. diligently inform the shaykh of one's conditions. After this, it is dependent on one's individual capabilities. Differences in capabilities will decide how quickly or how slowly the objective is realized. I have covered everything."

Victories In The Path

A seeker asked: What is it that has to be obtained from the spiritual masters and how can it be obtained?

Hadrat Wālā replied: "There are some actions which one is instructed to carry out. They are both internal and external. Then there are some actions which one is instructed to abstain from. These are also internal and external. Some rational and practical mistakes are committed in each of these two categories. The spiritual masters of the path listen to the conditions of the seeker, understand the obstacles and then provide a treatment. It is now the responsibility of the seeker to practise on it. In order to help the seeker on his path, the spiritual masters also prescribe certain forms of dhikr. The objective and the path have both been learnt from this explanation."

Clarity Of The Path

A seeker wrote: "I am a novice. I request Hadrat Wālā to tell me what is acquired from the spiritual masters and, accordingly, to teach the path to an ordinary but busy man like me."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The self has certain ailments and the treatments for them are recorded in the books. Physical ailments are also recorded in the books but we still have a need to consult doctors and physicians. In the same way, there is a need for a shaykh – a mentor – for the treatment of spiritual maladies. If you have understood this much, I will show you the different types of ailments and, once you have understood them, I will show you their treatments."

79. Simplification Of The Path

The following was related previously.

A seeker wrote: "I find my condition ruined. There is nothing but perplexity."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The desire to put yourself into difficulty is certainly not its treatment. The path is absolutely clear – do not worry about what is not within your control. Taking courage is within your control. If you err, make up for the past through seeking forgiveness and renew your courage for the future. In addition to courage, adhere to prayer and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā*."

80. Progress In Acts Of Obedience

A seeker requested a form of dhikr or procedure through which he progresses in acts of obedience and it becomes easy for him to abstain from sins.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Acts of obedience and sins are both within one's control, forms of dhikr have nothing to do with them. Thus, the procedure for controllable matters is for one to make use of his control, and nothing else. Yes, there is a need for striving in order to ease one's choice, and the reality of it is to combat the self. A person will gradually acquire ease if he does this all the time. I wrote the essence of the procedure. After that, two things are left for the shaykh to do, viz. (1) diagnosing certain psychological ailments, and (2) prescribing ways of striving which are actually treatments for those ailments.

Another seeker described his conditions and requested rectification. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Do not worry about the things which are out of your control. Rather show determination in carrying out what is within your control. If you display shortcomings in this regard, seek forgiveness, make up for it and pray to Allāh *taʿālā* for inspiration. This is the rectification."

81. Seeking Forgiveness For Unwitting Heedlessness

A seeker experienced the following doubt: When an unwitting whispering enters the heart, it means that I was heedless for the duration of that whispering. So I seek forgiveness each time this happens. The doubt which I am now experiencing is that when heedlessness is unwittingly committed, it is not a sin. Why, then, should I seek forgiveness? And if I do not seek forgiveness, I do not feel at ease.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "A whispering and its essential result – heedlessness – when wittingly committed is not a sin because

one is not taken to task for it. However, it is a deficiency and repugnant in itself. Just as seeking forgiveness can wipe out a sin, it can also undo a deficiency. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to seek forgiveness after cloudiness of the heart, after all it was beneath his level of perfection."

82. Difference Between Reliance And Entrustment

A seeker wanted to know the difference between reliance [on Allāh *taʿālā*] and entrustment [or handing over everything to Allāh *taʿālā*]. Hadrat Wālā replied: "For some people, reliance means casting aside all assumed plans, while for others it means casting aside impermissible planning and becoming immersed in permissible planning. Entrustment means that if after it there is failure in one's planning or the incident has nothing to do with planning – e.g. calamities which are not in one's control – then we must not make any objections to Allāh *taʿālā*."

Note: In several places of this letter, entrustment was explained by the popular meaning of acceptance. This meaning is not on the basis of reality but its effect [in other words, entrusting all one's affairs to Allāh *taʿālā* leads to acceptance of His decrees]. The reality of entrustment is the highest level of reliance, and acceptance is the effect of this high level. Other spiritual masters also took the meaning of acceptance.

كما في القشيرية: سمعت الأستاذ أبا علي الدقاق يقول: التوكل ثلث درجات، التوكل، ثم التسليم، ثم التفويض. فالمتوكل ليسكن إلى وعده، وصاحب التسليم يكتفي بعلمه، وصاحب التفويض يرضى بحكمه، وسمعته يقول: التوكل بداية، والتسليم أوسطه، والتفويض نهاية.

The above details were not in my mind when I was writing the reply. I am now drawing the attention of the reader to it so that no error is made in this regard.

83. A Second Striving

A seeker wrote: The urge to commit sins had waned for some time, but this urge has returned with full fervour causing me extreme bewilderment.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Most of those who follow this path experience this condition. There is no need to fear. Your present fight against your self is called a second striving. Allāh

willing, its effect will be firmly embedded. Occasional light demands which are natural do not negate this firmness. These changes in condition can be understood from the following example: A sort of brightness is noticed in the latter part of the night. It is known as false dawn. A person who does not have knowledge of it rejoices over the departure of darkness. But then that light disappears and darkness pervades once again. Soon thereafter, another brightness appears. It is known as true dawn because it remains, in fact, its light increases."

The same person wrote: "The previous difficulty and restriction which I experienced in curtailing my self is not experienced at present."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is a sign that your urge to return to sinning is weak. Had it been strong, it would have been difficult to combat it – as it had been previously."

He also wrote: "I am astounded at the fact that my self does not oppose me when I have to carry out my different forms of dhikr, yet it urges me towards sin. It is probably a subtle plot, and I do not know what to do about it. I am currently practising on Hadrat Wālā's previous prescriptions."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Follow the same procedure and, Allāh willing, all complaints will be removed. If you experience the same urge again, resort to the same prescription. Do not even try to put a complete end to everything. Some people suffer from flu symptoms throughout the flu season. But the treatment is same – they have to continue taking their medication. It is useless to try to get rid of the flu permanently."

84. Whisperings About The Futility Of Striving

A poverty-stricken seeker described several baseless whisperings and requested a treatment for them. One of his whisperings was: The basis for worldly comfort is not good deeds. In fact, even comfort in the Hereafter is dependent on Allāh's grace. Furthermore, if a person does not take the burden of difficult actions such as tahajjud and so on and confines himself only to the pillars of Islam, then what is wrong with that?

He added: I do not feel any inclination towards praying to Allāh *taʿālā* because I feel that such a long time has passed and yet

my prayers have gone unanswered. Thus, only what Allāh wills, that is what will happen [there is no need to pray]. However, I do compel myself to read *Munājāt Maqbūl*. Similarly, I have been disinclined to dhikr for the past week. I merely fulfil the specified number.

He also asked about his livelihood. Hadrat Wālā replied to all his doubts and misgivings as follows:

"The total and beneficial treatment is for you to believe that your whisperings are evil and to abstain from acting on their demands; they will be repulsed automatically. Even if they do not, this is not harmful because it is a type of striving which, if done, will earn you more rewards. However, if you only want to know why such whisperings are harmful, then briefly, it is enough for you to understand that the purpose of good deeds is comfort in the Hereafter, not in this world. As for Allāh's grace and mercy being the bases for comfort, it does not mean that good deeds have no role whatsoever to play. What it means is that you will receive the comfort through your good deeds, but the extent which you will receive is not because of your deeds, it is the effect of Allāh's grace and mercy. However, if a person does not even do any good deeds, he will be legally deprived of the grace and mercy as well. As for whether you are inclined to carrying out the deeds and feeling like doing them or not, this is not the prerequisite for acceptance. Even if a person does not feel like drinking a medication, he will experience relief when he drinks it. As for prayers [duʿā'] they are certainly accepted but the reality of their acceptance is similar to that of an illness. The reality of the acceptance of a request is like a person requesting a physician to treat him with a laxative and to commence such a treatment immediately. However, the laxative was not suited to his condition, so the physician proceeded with a different course of treatment. No one will say that since the physician did not give the patient a laxative he did not accept his request. In the same way, the essential purpose of duʿā' is to gain the special attention of Allāh *taʿālā*. The aiding path which the servant chose is not the goal, but just one way to the goal – as there are other ways to it as well. Therefore, no matter from which way Allāh *taʿālā* focuses His attention, it is an acceptance of the duʿā' – irrespective of whether it is through the way which the servant envisaged or the way which Allāh *taʿālā* willed. All this applies to acts of obedience and needs. As for the committing of sins which

convey one to the Hell-fire, they are similar to a sick person enjoying the foods and drinks which he was warned against having, and experiences no enjoyment whatsoever when he abides by the physician's instructions. However, the person who knows that enjoyment is not the goal, good health is, he will exercise patience and abide by the physician's instructions. In the same way, the person whose goal is salvation in the Hereafter does not consider worldly comfort to be his goal. As for punishments for sins, some people receive it here, others in the Hereafter. The most appropriate, in fact, obligatory procedure is to remain occupied in acts of obedience as much as possible, abstain from sins, and to consider Allāh's pleasure to be the sole objective irrespective of whether it manifests itself in this world or the next. To read any form of dhikr for increase in livelihood under your present condition will only cause an increase in your whisperings."

85. The Reality Of Pride

A person who did not pledge bay'ah wrote: I have come across many explanations by Hadrat Wālā about the harms of pride and its treatment from Hadrat Wālā's writings and lectures. However, I have not come across or remember coming across anything about the reality of pride.

He also said: If I commit excesses against those who are under me and then ask them to pardon me, I will lose my authority over them.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is possible that I did not write on this subject. If this is correct, the reason could be that its reality is obvious, viz. to consider oneself to be greater than others. There are two levels to it:

(1) An unintentional thought of greatness comes into a person's mind, and to think in this manner unintentionally. This level is subdivided into two further levels: (a) To abstain from acting on the demands of this thought. This too is most certainly not blameworthy. (b) To act on its demands. This is blameworthy and sinful.

(2) To intentionally consider oneself to be great. It is altogether blameworthy even if one does not act on its demands.

The general involvement in the error which you mentioned is correct but there are details with regard to it. The essence of it

is that sometimes one thinks that if we were to ask our subordinates for pardon in clear terms, they will become audacious and become more disobedient. Sometimes a person thinks that the subordinate will feel ashamed. This is a valid excuse if he wishes to continue his relationship with him. In such cases, merely making the subordinate happy could well take the place of seeking his pardon. In some cases, if one does not want to have any relationship with such a person, e.g. by suspending him or he himself leaves the job, then it is necessary to explicitly ask for his pardon. This is because the two excuses [of becoming audacious or causing shame] no longer exist. If you find impediments in seeking his pardon, then I feel that it certainly stems from pride. Although you may not consider yourself to be great, you will be acting on the demands of pride. Although it may not be doctrinal pride, it is certainly pride in action. If anyone does not accept these categories of pride, he has still committed a wrong for which it is obligatory for him to seek pardon. If not asking for pardon does not entail pride, the sin of committing a wrong is still present."

86. Plurality Of Thoughts

A seeker wrote: When I am in salāh or reciting the Qur'ān, I think to myself that I am reciting it to Allāh *taʿālā*. Then my thoughts go towards thinking that Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator of the letters and He is enabling me to utter them. My thoughts then go one step further and I think that Allāh *taʿālā* is present and watching me. In short, several thoughts of tranquillity pervade me. But because they are several [and I think of them], I do not experience tranquillity. Instead, there is plurality of thoughts in my efforts to acquire tranquillity.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "When several thoughts are experienced for the realization of concentration and focus, their effect is in fact concentration and focus. This is not harmful."

87. Blameworthy Relationships

A seeker, quoting from the writings of Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī *quddisa sirruhu*, said: If the heart attaches itself to anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, it is in fact imprisoned. An indication that the heart is not imprisoned is when it totally disregards everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* and becomes unaware of everything else to the extent that even if it imposes

on itself to think of them, it does not; and it becomes impossible for the heart to have even a fleeting thought of anyone or anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*.

When I measure myself against the above standard, I find that I am lacking. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, in the depths of my heart I find nothing but Allāh *taʿālā*, but on its outskirts, I do experience thoughts of others beside Him and also recall them.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Most of those of high rank are sometimes overwhelmed by conditions. Consequently, their zeal has an effect on their explanation of issues. I consider the above tone quite sharp but the message is the same as gauged from the texts. Let me explain the same theme in a simpler way. It is close to the explanation of Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and clearer than the well-known theme. The word imprisonment does not refer to general bond because the bond which is overwhelmed is not blameworthy. Instead it refers to a bond which, due to distance or absence, has such an effect on the heart that it makes it restless and it becomes preoccupied in thinking of it and fretting over it. This preoccupation causes a decrease or weakness in acts of obedience. If it does not reach this level, then the mere effect of grief is not an obstacle. Can anyone deny the severe grief of Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām*? Can anyone say that his condition came as an obstacle between him and Allāh *taʿālā*?

The same person had written before this: Since quite some time I have been trying to embed the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* so deeply in my heart that I never forget Him even if I try, and the mere thinking of others besides Him becomes impossible.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "I myself do not enjoy such a condition nor do I want it because it would mean that I no longer have a choice of my own; I will be a compelled and constrained person."

The person then wrote the previously quoted question whose reply was given above.

88. Love For Name And Fame

A seeker wrote: I have a love for name and fame. I want people to praise me and speak highly of me. I experience a type of joy and happiness when I am praised. My self feels extremely

offended if anyone speaks ill of me or abstains from praising me.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Every treatment requires striving. In other words, awareness of the evil demand of the self and a practical opposition to that demand. The treatment for this illness is also made up of these two aspects. First of all, you must be conscious of the ills of this evil quality and bear in mind the warnings which have been issued against it. In fact, you must even repeat its ills and warnings verbally. You must address yourself by saying: "There is the danger of such and such punishment against you for committing this evil." Together with this, you must be conscious of your faults and address your self by saying: "If people were to learn of these evils in you, they will despise and scorn you. So consider it a boon that they do not abhor and despise you for expecting them to praise you. The practical treatment is that you must verbally stop the one who praises you and be particular about it. It is not enough to stop him superficially. Together with this, you must accord respect to those whom you despise and look down on, even if you find it difficult to do. Practise on whatever I said for one week and inform me."

Another seeker wrote: Since some time I am finding traces of self-conceit. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Man is only accountable to abstain from acting on the demands of such evil characteristics. As for the demands themselves disappearing or weakening, man is neither accountable for that nor can this be realized easily. Moreover, you are studying so you do not have the time for all this. So confine yourself to what you are accountable for, viz. believe in your heart that you are the worst of all people. Being conscious of your faults will help you to develop this belief. Go to great pains in honouring those whom you consider insignificant, impose on yourself to offer salām to them even if your self is not pleased by it. Displeasure is not within one's control so one is not taken to task for it, but dealings with people are within one's control. Therefore, one can be taken to task for shortcomings in this regard. Allāh willing, the source of evil will become weak if these steps are followed. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone."

89. Acceptance Of Divine Decree

A seeker wrote: Kindly provide a treatment to acquire the quality of acceptance of divine decree, and also its criterion and the extent to which man is accountable for this quality.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The reality of acceptance of divine decree is to abstain from making any objections to divine decree. If there is no feeling of pain at all, the acceptance is natural. If feelings of pain remain, the acceptance is rational. The first is a condition for which man is not accountable. The second is a station for which man is accountable. The treatment for it is to be conscious of Allāh's mercy and wisdom in matters which are against one's nature."

90. Abhor Your Own Evils More Than Those Of Others

A seeker wrote: I consider the matters which are against the Sharīʿah and are found in me to be evil and worthy of abstention. However, I do not find so much of abhorrence for my self as I find when I see others committing acts against the Sharīʿah. I fear pride because of this.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Different level of abhorrence are not signs of pride. Rational abhorrence is the same in both cases, and this is what man is instructed to have. These differences are in natural abhorrence. For example, a person abhors his own faeces but abhors the faeces of others more. These differences stem from love and obviously man loves his own self more than what he loves others. This is the reason why a mother does not recoil from the faeces of her own child as she would from someone else's. This has nothing to do with pride."

91. The Reality Of Nisbat

The following is Hadrat Wālā's reply to a seeker's question on nisbat: "The linguistic meaning of nisbat is affinity and attachment. In Sufism it refers to a servant's special bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, viz. eternal obedience and overwhelming remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. And Allāh's special bond with His servant, viz. acceptance and pleasure. This is similar to the relationship which exists between an obedient lover and a loyal beloved. Signs that a person is a sāhib-e-nisbat include the following: when a person remains in his company, he becomes inclined towards the Hereafter and disinclined from the world, more religiously-minded people are inclined towards him, and

fewer worldly people are inclined to him. However, special recognition of these signs are experienced less by the masses; the people of the path are more likely to recognize them."

The seeker also asked: Do flagrant sinners and unbelievers enjoy this affinity? Hadrat Wālā replied: "Now that you have learnt the meaning of affinity, it is obvious that a flagrant sinner or unbeliever cannot become a Sāhib-e-nisbat. Some people mistakenly consider special conditions – which are actually the fruits of striving and spiritual exercises – to be affinity. This condition can be found in any person who strives, but it is a definition of the ignoramuses.

92. The Reality Of Honesty And Sincerity

A scholarly seeker asked about the Sharʿī realities of honesty and sincerity, and the treatment and aids for their acquisition. Hadrat Wālā replied: "The intention to carry out an act of obedience and to adopt the level of perfection for it is known as honesty. Abstaining from an act of disobedience while carrying out this act of obedience is known as sincerity. This is dependent on knowing what would convey it to the level of perfection and knowing what that act of disobedience is. Thereafter, only the intention and action remains. And both these are within one's control. The method of acquiring these qualities have been gauged from the above explanation. As for what would aid their acquisition, it is to be conscious of the promises of reward and warnings of punishment, and to meditate over one's intention."

"An example of honesty is to perform salāh in a manner which the Sharīʿah refers to as a perfect salāh. In other words, to perform it while carrying out its external and internal etiquette. The same applies to the level of perfection as shown by the Sharīʿah in all other acts of obedience. An example of sincerity in salāh is that there must be no intention of ostentation. The latter is an act of disobedience. There must be no intention of pleasing others besides Allāh *taʿālā* because it is also an act of disobedience. Other factors which are connected to it are obvious."

93. Jealousy

Hadrat Wālā gave the following reply to a seeker's request for a treatment for jealousy: "Praise the one whom you are jealous of

in a gathering. When he comes before your, honour him. Send gifts periodically to him. This will cause him to love you and you will develop love for him. One is not jealous of one's beloved. This is a general treatment which is easier to carry out and quicker to realize than a specific treatment. As for your request for a treatment for greed, you must ask about it in a separate letter."

94. Acquiring The Reality Of Asceticism

A seeker enquired about the nature of asceticism and an easy way of acquiring it. Hadrat Wālā replied: "The nature of asceticism is to have very little desire for the world. It is acquired by meditating over the fleeting nature of this world and not becoming engrossed in trying to acquire unnecessary things of this world. An easy way of acquiring it is to remain in the company of ascetics and to study the lives of ascetics."

95. The Required Type Of Yearning And Dislike

A seeker complained: I neither have a natural desire for good deeds nor a natural aversion for evil deeds. Hadrat Wālā replied: "Natural desire and aversion are not the objectives. Rational desire and aversion are sufficient and this is what we are ordered to have. Repeated practising on this creates desire and aversion in most cases. And it is not harmful if not acquired."

96. A Quest, Not Union, Is The Objective

A seeker described his conditions and wrote with extreme remorse: Hadrat! For how long will I remain fallen on the path? Convey me to the destination as well. Hadrat Wālā replied: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the effects of firmness are beginning to manifest themselves. I was most pleased by this letter. Allāh willing, the destination will draw nearer with each passing day.

> Do not go towards despair because there are many hopes. Do not go towards darkness because there are many suns.

The spiritual masters state that a quest is required, not reaching one's destination. An explanation of this is that one must not have that demand in his heart that he has to acquire his objective. This too is an obstacle because this demand

creates confusion, and confusion renders one's concentration and handing over of one's affairs to Allāh *taʿālā* upside down. Concentration and handing over of one's affairs to Allāh *taʿālā* are the prerequisites for reaching one's objective. This must be firmly embedded because it is the soul of Sufism. This is from among the special gifts of Ḫājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḫib which very few spiritual masters of our times are endowed with."

97. A Wisdom Behind Certain Conditions

A seeker writes: While I was engaged in dhikr on Tuesday night, I saw the entire musjid brightly illuminated. When I opened my eyes, I found it illuminated in the same way. Hadrat Wālā replied: "One of the wisdoms behind such conditions is so that the seeker may remain energized and it becomes easy for him to remain occupied in the path."

98. Fluctuations In Fear And Hope

A seeker described some of his conditions. One of the points which he made was: In the beginning I had less fear of Allāh *taʿālā* and strong hopes. But now I am experiencing the opposite. In the beginning I had more fear for Hadrat Wālā but now it is the opposite. Why have these changes taken place? This has caused me to have doubts. Please provide a treatment.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Both conditions cause progress and an increase in recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. However, Allāh's perfections are unlimited and endless. This is why affinity is followed by fear and vice versa. Sometimes an exposition is experienced which results in affinity. It is followed by a manifestation which causes fear. It is followed by another manifestation which results in affinity which is different from the first one. Once a person recognizes the limited and ending nature of man's excellences, he encompasses them. Encompassing causes habit, and habit results in a deficiency whose mark is fear."

99. Dhikr With The Heart And Dhikr With The Tongue

A seeker wrote: My dhikr with the tongue is decreasing while dhikr with the heart is increasing. I am able to easily engage in dhikr with the heart most of the time, even when I am occupied in other tasks. However, it stops when I am occupied in mental

work. I am trying to occupy myself in it even when I am occupied in mental work.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You will not be able to do this because one cannot direct one's attention to two things at one and the same time. However, there is no harm in not being able to do it. If dhikr with the tongue is difficult at such a time, there is no harm in restricting yourself to dhikr with the heart. If not, you should not restrict yourself to dhikr with the heart. Dhikr with the tongue is also necessary even if it results in a decrease in dhikr with the heart."

100. Joy To The Hearts

A khalīfah wrote a lengthy letter which was filled with describing his incompetence and his lamentation over his regretful conditions. The essence of it was that he was about to depart from this world but could not say with confidence that he fulfilled even one department of Dīn correctly. Now which condition can he rectify [when there are so many and his life has come to an end]? This is especially so with regard to that department which is difficult and most important, viz. perfection of character. He felt that it was a waste of time to even speak about it because he does not even have full knowledge about it, let alone practising on it.

He adds: Sometimes I think to myself that I do not even know if I have īmān in my heart or not. I do not even know what Allāh *taʿālā* has willed for me. If – Allāh forbid, Allāh forbid – His will for me is something negative, what will happen to me? Sometimes I reach the point of thinking that if He did not have any negative will for me, why would I not have inspiration to do good deeds and for rectification? At least one department of Dīn in my life would have been in order. I lose my sleep at night when I think of these things. What will this eventually lead to? At such a time I can do nothing but make this prayer: O Allāh! Do not treat us in a manner which we deserve, but treat us in a manner which is worthy of You.

In short, this entire letter was a long and frightening story of grief and remorse. It ought to be titled "an injury to the hearts". He ended his letter with a request for guidance which would bring tranquillity to him. Hadrat Wālā wrote the following reply which ought to be titled "a joy to the hearts". He wrote:

No one apart from the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* can be completely perfect. Even those who are perfect do not consider themselves to be such. Each one sees his own defects irrespective of whether the defect is factual or attributed. They are also grieved when they see these defects. Their grief is so intense that if it were to fall on us, we would die. It is obligatory to give up expectations of perfection. Yes, it is obligatory to strive for it. It will take the form as experienced by you at present. An example of this is of a sick person who has lost hope of total recovery but does not consider it permissible to give up his concern for health and adopting measures for its acquisition. Salvation, in fact proximity, too is not dependent on perfection. Rather, it is dependent on concern for the promised perfection. And Allāh does not go back on His promise. If one's life ends in this way, it will be a great mercy and bounty. This is the meaning of what Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* said:

> Continue digging in this path, do not take a rest for even a single moment so that even in your final moment you will be striving and the kindness of Allāh *taʿālā* may be on you.

Finally, whether you refer to it as an exposition of a condition, concern for your well-being or removal of confusion, I say that I myself am experiencing the same turmoil. If I consider it a blessing – the effect of which is that I cannot say if fear is more or hope – I am forced to take refuge in this prayer which gives me some strength and courage: O Allāh! You be there for me, and make me for You."

The reader must have got an insight to Hadrat Wālā's statements and teachings on the subject of spiritual enlightenment. These were quoted in the appropriate sections of the present chapter. I am making specific reference to the last 100 replies of Hadrat Wālā. It must be clearly witnessed from these that – by the help of Allāh *taʿālā* – Hadrat Wālā laid bare the Sufism which was generally considered to be a mystery and a hidden secret. He brought it into the open and demonstrated that the spiritual treasure whose acquisition had been regarded to be most difficult and was incorrectly believed to be reserved only for the elite, is extremely easy to acquire and is there for everyone – the elite and the masses. He demonstrated that Sufism is not an alien concept. Rather, it is very much in accordance with intellect, natural disposition, extremely easy and very attractive.

In reality, true Islam which is a synonym of absolute Sufism ought to be of that level described above and is in fact on that level. In order to support the above theme, Hadrat Wālā's statement is quoted from *Tarīq Qalandar*. Towards the end of this lecture, he clearly explains the reality of the path, provides a comprehensive procedure for reaching one's objective, and explains – with full confidence – how easy its acquisition is. He says:

I have already explained the Qalandar way. However, it is also necessary to explain the procedure which is to be followed because knowing the reality of a thing is not enough to put it into practice. I am therefore explaining the manner in which the Qalandar way can be acquired. We learnt previously that this is a path which combines love and action. Thus, we will have to learn how to acquire these two. As regards action, I can say that a person must show courage and the action will come into existence. This is the only way. However, the question remains as to how can love be developed? Here, I will give you a prescription which is worth millions of rupees for free. This prescription is made up of several parts. They are all minute points so listen attentively. The first is action. I had mentioned previously that action has the special quality of generating love and has a major influence in creating love. You can try this out

for yourself. Go to a person daily and you will find yourself developing love towards the person. It will be little in the beginning, but gradually it will result in a very strong bond. It is an accepted fact that the more interaction with a person, the more the love. In short, the blessings of good actions is that they create love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

One question comes up at this point: We are doing good deeds since a long time but love does not seem to be developing. The answer to this is that doing good deeds does not only mean to merely do them. Rather, this entails several parts. One part is to do the good deed, the second part is to do it in the prescribed manner, e.g. merely knocking on the ground is not salāh. So a good deed has to be done as instructed and in the manner shown. You will then see how love develops. The third reason why it does not seem to have an effect is that you did the action solely out of habit and not with the intention of increasing your love for Allāh *taʿālā*. You did not make this intention in your heart: O Allāh! I am doing it so that I develop love for You. Now do a good deed with this intention and see what effect it has. Anyway, one part of this prescription is that you must do a good deed with the intention of increasing your love, and remain occupied in this with steadfastness.

The second essential point is that you must take the name of Allāh *taʿālā* with all your heart. In other words, you must also engage in some dhikr. The third and very crucial point is that you must remain in the company of the true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. People generally flee from this. First of all there is no inclination to remaining in the company of a pious elder. People just read a few books and they think they have become experts. Have you ever seen a person becoming an expert merely from books!? O brother! It is common sense that you cannot become a carpenter without remaining with one. In fact, if you were to hold a carpenter's axe on your own, you will not hold it as it ought to be held. You will not be able to hold a needle properly without remaining with a tailor. You can never become a calligrapher without sitting with one and observing how a pen has to be held and how a letter is to be formed. In short, you cannot become an expert in any field without remaining in the company of an expert. The companionship of a spiritual master is therefore essential. After that, you get the occasional disciple surpassing his mentor.

However, in the beginning, there is no alternative to remaining in the company of a spiritual master. But nowadays no one seems to understand the need for this. A person happens to go to a mentor by chance and is immediately reprimanded. He now becomes terrified and feels he has trapped himself in a calamity. He thinks to himself: "I came here considering him to be a pious elder. But he started off by treating me contemptuously. What kind of elder is he? What kind of Allāh's man is he? An example of this is similar to a person who has a stomach ailment. He goes to a doctor and says: "I used to eat sweetmeats in my house. So you must prescribe sweetmeats for me." Look at the stupidity! Whereas, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, you are also having diarrhoea. Your stomach is not right and your digestion is not good. Such is your condition, yet you are asking the doctor to prescribe sweetmeats. Will the doctor ever accommodate this? Based on your condition, he prescribed a bitter purgative. But you refused to drink it. So he took a spoon and forced the medicine into your mouth. But you forced yourself to vomit and took out everything from your stomach. You are vomiting and proudly exclaiming that you eat sweetmeats in your house. I do not know what stupid medicine the doctor gave me. If only a well-wisher were to say to you: "O you foolish fellow! What do you know? The one who is giving you this bitter purgative is not your enemy, rather he is preparing your system to be able to eat sweetmeats. Your stomach cannot tolerate sweetmeats at present. Eating sweetmeats in your present condition is causing your diarrhoea.

So I say to you: Rectification can only be realized through rectification. Since you have come to a shaykh for rectification, you will have to tolerate his strictness and insults. If you cannot tolerate all this, you should not even request rectification from him. Brother! Rectification will only be carried out through rectification. If you go there with an abscess you will have to succumb to a lancet. The lancet is inevitable.

> You began to flee from love with just a single injury.
> You know nothing apart from just the name of love.

You only know about love in name. You fled from there when you suffered just one injury. Whereas, the etiquette there is:

> If you are going to get angry over every injury, how will you be cleansed if you do not agree to a bit of rubbing?

If this is how you are going to respond, then I say to you: A mere waẕīfah (form of dhikr or spiritual practice) for rectification will not suffice. I take an oath in Allāh’s name, I take an oath in Allāh’s name, I take an oath in Allāh’s name and say that rectification can never be achieved from those mentors who merely dish out waẕīfahs. Rectification can only be achieved when the ways of rectification are followed. So go to the true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* and pay heed to what they say. Your heart will be illuminated within a few days. By Allāh, you will be protected in such a manner that even an entire kingdom will be of no value and significance to you. H̱aḏrat H̱āfiẕ *raẖimahullāh* says:

> When H̱āfiẕ obliterated himself, he did not consider the kingdom of kings to equal a grain of barley.

Brother, I do not have any means stronger than an oath to convince you. Brother, I take an oath again and say that the person who acquires Allāh’s love through this path will never fear death, pleurisy, pneumonia, fever, drought, plague and any other worry. He will become as if he is in Paradise. Yes, if he does experience worry, it will be after thinking: Is Allāh displeased with me? How am I in His sight? I do not know whether He is pleased with me or displeased. There will be no other worry. But this worry is most enjoyable and thousands of happiness can be sacrificed for it. If someone were to say to him: “Come let us make an exchange. Give me this one worry of yours and I will give you all my happiness in exchange”, he will refuse. So brother, you will get this treasure by remaining with the people of Allāh *taʿālā* and following them. Thus, the essence of the path is that you must show courage in doing good deeds, adhere externally and internally to the Sharīʿah, and remain in Allāh’s remembrance. Visit the people of Allāh *taʿālā* occasionally, and read the books which they ask you to read in their absence. Yes, these are four things. I guarantee that the one who carries them out will become a manifestation of “Allāh loves them and they love Him”. He will certainly become this, he will definitely be included among such people.

Brother, the choice is yours. Try it out and see and experience for yourself. There is no need for you to become a murīd. There

is no need for bayʿah, rather the spirit of bayʿah is of essence, i.e. following and emulating. In short, there is no need for you to become a murīd. All you have to do is start acting according to what the shaykh says to you, and your bond would be established. By Allāh, you will get the same benefit which is to be found in a shaykh/murīd relationship. People are very strange. When you show them what to do, they do not do it. All they want is a display of bayʿah. What is bayʿah today? It has been reduced to a custom and nothing else. Consequently, people are very happy with shaykhs who merely induct murīds without teaching them and showing them what to do. When I induct a murīd and show him what to do, they become angry at me. They assume that the secrets of love which are supposedly known to the fakirs will be shared with the murīds. They think that the moment they become murīds, the shaykh will teach them the secrets of love and they will immediately become the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. Take the name of Allāh *taʿālā* and of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and carry out their orders – that is the secret. Ask the shaykh the way of rectification, that is the secret which you ought to ask him. If someone were to ask: "What! Is this what the spiritual path is all about?" We will proclaim in a loud voice: "Yes, this is what it is. You will experience many conditions and states in this path but they are not the objectives." Brother, conditions are merely blooming trees along the path. If you see them, so what? If you do not see them, so what? You will still traverse the path. Seeing the trees and flowers along the way is not a prerequisite of traversing the path.

You will traverse it irrespective of whether you see them or not. The precondition is for you to continue walking. Some people do not see these flowers and trees throughout their lives. By Allāh, the conditions which you consider to be great achievements are merely like rose and jasmine trees on both sides of the path. Will you not traverse the path if you were to lower your gaze and proceed? The path will most certainly be traversed irrespective of whether your eyes fall on the trees and flowers or not.

How sorrowful! Those ignorant Sufis have ruined Sufism. They say: "Divorce your wife for forty days, lock your door, take forty chick peas and eat one daily. You cannot acquire asceticism without all this." I say: "By Allāh, you can acquire asceticism even by wearing two shawls, having pillows and mattresses,

having a kingdom, and eating the most exotic foods. But not at your house. You will get all this in the service of a spiritual master.”

Hadrat Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAttār *rahimahullāh* was a very erudite spiritual master. A master like Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says with regard to him:

> ʿAttār traversed through the entire city with love, while we are still taking the first turn of the alley.

The same Hadrat Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAttār *rahimahullāh* says:

> O heart! If you really want to undertake this journey, you will have to hold on to the guide and never go back.
>
> O Farīd! Become true in your quest so that you may obtain the key to true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*.
>
> The one who treads the path of love without a companion will spend his entire life without learning a thing about love.

However, the shaykh must be a spiritual master. The mark of a spiritual master is that he adheres totally to the Sharīʿah, is free from innovation and polytheism, does not commit any act of ignorance, the effect of sitting in his company is that love for this world decreases while love for Allāh *taʿālā* increases, when you describe your spiritual illness to him he listens attentively and provides a treatment for it, his treatment proves to be beneficial at every step of the way, following him improves your condition with every passing day. These are the marks of a spiritual master. If you find such a person, he is the most superior and greatest elixir. This is the procedure for developing love and this is how love will be achieved. As for actions, courage and determination are essential for them.

People make one other mistake. Once they have appointed a person as their shaykh, they think he is accountable and responsible for their deeds. This is no fault of the people because it is the very same materialist Sufis who deceived them. These Sufis who have made Sufism into a business have placed a veil over the eyes of the poor ignorant people by saying to them: “You do not have to do anything, we will do everything for you.” Now the public expects the same from genuine shaykhs as well. I constantly receive letters wherein people say

to me: "My eyes do not open for tahajjud s̲alāh. Pray that my eyes open." I reply: "Very well, I will pray for you on one condition. You must pray that I get such legs with which I can reach Calcutta every day, hold you by your hand and wake you up." Look at their foolishness! If they cannot wake up, what can I do? Brother, make an effort to get up. If there is no way you can wake up then at least perform the rakʿats of tahajjud after the ʿishā s̲alāh. There is a treatment for everything.

Some of them say: "I am unable to complete the prescribed spiritual practices. Focus your attention on me so that I am able to complete them." They want everything to happen through focus. Here, let me tell you the reality of focus. Brothers! Do you think the focus of an outsider will help if you yourself do not turn your focus and do not show some courage? Everything is dependent on courage and determination. The foolish ones think that everything is in the control of the shaykhs. What can a poor shaykh do!? Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself was extremely desirous of the īmān of Abū T̲ālib but he was not guided. So much so, Allāh *taʿālā* addressed him saying:

اِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِيْ مَنْ اَحْبَبْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ

You cannot guide whom you will. Rather, Allāh guides whomever He wills.[1]

Now look! If Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* could not guide a person through his focus, what can a poor shaykh achieve? You see! You have now learnt the reality of focus.

In short, if anything is to be achieved, it can only be done through work. Yet you want to do nothing, and you want the focus of the shaykh to do everything for you and to reach perfection through it. O brother! Before making such a request to the shaykh, you should at least find out how he acquired the expertise which he has. Brother, it was acquired after turning the millstone. The grain was first crushed and made into flour, water was added to it, it was made into dough, rolled into rotis, placed onto a pan, cooked and then eaten. But you want to do nothing and want your stomach to get filled. You want to find a shaykh who gives you ready made rotis to eat. This will not

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[1] Sūrah al-Qas̲as̲, 28: 56.

happen. Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam himself never fed ready made rotis to anyone, so how can you? Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, out of his extreme kindness and affection, wanted to feed ready made rotis, but Allāh *taʿālā* did not permit it for Dīnī reasons. So brother! Understand this well. You can only progress if you work for it. This is the only way: work hard, strive, and Allāh *taʿālā* will bless you. If you really want to achieve anything, there is no alternative to working and striving. I proved this under the verse:

يُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ

They strive in Allāh's cause.

In short, you must refer to and revert to a shaykh who has reached a stage of perfection and possesses the qualities and signs which I listed, but do not insist on bayʿah. If he accepts your request, it is his kindness. But you must not worry about it. Thereafter, you must do whatever he says to you. If he makes you strive and work hard, then strive and work hard. If he engages you in dhikr and other spiritual practices, carry them out. Your main concern must be to obtain the companionship of a spiritual master.

I conclude by saying that those who display shortcomings in the objective are of two types. (1) Those who display shortcomings in actions. They must strengthen their determination and proceed with courage. (2) Those who lack in love [for Allāh]. They must remain in the company of the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. Both factors are essential in the path. One is action and the other is love. The first requires determination, the second requires companionship of the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* and emulating them. The lecture, *Ṯarīq Qalandar*, ends here.

SPECIAL WAYS OF RECTIFICATION

As promised, I now present some of Hadrat Wālā's special ways of rectification. This demonstrates his distinguished position in the field of instruction. They have proved to be extremely effective and beneficial because they are based on correct principles and most appropriate to present temperaments. They are worthy of putting into practice by other spiritual masters as well. However, mere imitation will not suffice. Understanding, methodology and affinity are nonetheless essential prerequisites. Hadrat Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

> Every person who reddens his face does not necessarily know how to beautify himself. Every person who holds a looking glass does not necessarily know how to run a kingdom.
>
> There are thousands of mysteries which are finer than hair. Every clean shaven person does not necessarily know the Qalandar way.

I also have to say that I do not intend covering all aspects. This is most difficult, in fact, impossible because there are many of Hadrat Wālā's ways of rectification and training which can neither be described verbally nor by the pen. These can only be ascertained after a lengthy relationship of love and careful observation of incidents. A poet says:

> This attraction, coquetry and gait are not the only beauties. Rather, the beloveds have many qualities which do not even have names.

This is why I will only present some of Hadrat Wālā's specific and practical principles of rectification which are visibly seen today. Allāh willing, I will then conclude this chapter. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. I repeat, covering all aspects is neither my objective nor do I have any specific method of rectification in my mind at present. Rather, I feel I will write on Hadrat Wālā's special principles as they come to mind. However, in order to make it easy for me to recall them and to avoid confusion, I am tabling these five topics under which I will write the appropriate principles. The five topics are:

1. Principles related to bayʿah.

2. Principles related to teaching and training.
3. Principles related to writing and correspondence.
4. Principles related to those who come to visit Hadrat Wālā.
5. Miscellaneous principles.

May Allāh *taʿālā* enable me to compile this splendorous treasure easily and in an excellent manner. May He accept it, make it a treasure for me in the Hereafter, include it among my deeds of lasting merit, and enable Muslims to benefit from it until the day of Resurrection. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless this insignificant compiler with total affinity with Hadrat Wālā, enable him to bear the sciences of Hadrat Wālā which are derived solely from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and enable me to practise on his principles which are in total conformity with the Qur'ān, Hadīth and sound intellect.

I know fully well that a worthless person like myself should not allow such a great prayer to emanate from his insignificant mouth – because an incapable person like myself has no rank and position whatsoever. In fact, when I look at myself, I consider it impossible for such a prayer to be accepted in my favour. However, Allāh *taʿālā* is all-embracing. Even if the original prayer is not answered, I still have hope for reward and blessings in Dīn. It is out of this hope that I took the courage to make this prayer. May Allāh *taʿālā* fulfil my wish. Āmīn.

At the same time, I am not totally despondent of the acceptance of my prayer. Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> Do not say: I do not have any contact with the king.
> Nothing is difficult for the pious.

I now commence with Hadrat Wālā's special ways of training and rectification in the order of the topics listed above. May Allāh *taʿālā* help me and enable me to complete it easily and beautifully. Āmīn.

Principles Related To Bay'ah

Correction of beliefs with regard to bay'ah

Nowadays, bayʿah is generally considered to be an essential of the path. Whereas, the essential point is to derive benefit. Hadrat Wālā rectifies this extremist belief through the following practical rectification: When anyone requests him to accept his bayʿah, he asks the person the purpose of bayʿah. He continues

posing questions to the person until he gives the correct answer. The person either understands himself through Hadrat Wālā's questions (which are always posed in such a manner that a person with the slightest bit of affinity will be able to derive the correct answer), or the person acknowledges his inability and asks Hadrat Wālā for the answer. Hadrat Wālā then teaches him the correct objective. He does not tell it to the person on his own from the very beginning because when a person learns of something or is taught it after he was made to think about it himself, then it settles down firmly in his mind and he never forgets it. Based on this benefit, Hadrat Wālā adopts this methodology of teaching throughout the course of rectification.

If a seeker replies to Hadrat Wālā's question by saying that the objective of bay'ah is to gain Allāh's pleasure, he says to him: "This objective is not dependent on bay'ah. Studying and practising on what you learnt is enough for the realization of this objective." If a seeker says that the objective of bay'ah is to develop affinity and a special bond with the shaykh so that his instructions will be more effective and it will be easier to practise on them, Hadrat Wālā asks him: "Is it sufficient for the murīd alone to have affinity with his shaykh or should the shaykh also have affinity with his murīd?" When the person acknowledges that there has to be affinity from both sides, Hadrat Wālā says: "In such a case, mere bay'ah is not sufficient. There is something else which is necessary, e.g. remaining for a few days in the company of one's shaykh, to observe his peculiar temperament and give due consideration to it, to continue corresponding with him, etc. In short, mere bay'ah is not enough for mutual affinity. Rather, a shaykh develops affinity with his murīd more through the latter's ways and conduct."

In short, Hadrat Wālā pays particular attention to rectifying the extremist beliefs of the seekers with regard to bay'ah. Once he is satisfied that his excessive beliefs have been replaced by moderation, he does not even wait for the person to request for bay'ah. Instead, he sometimes fulfils the person's wish himself.

Bay'ah is accepted after a long time

There was a person who had been requesting bay'ah since a long time. Initially, Hadrat Wālā refused flatly, causing the man to lose hope. However, correspondence on a teacher/student

level continued. After some time, the man presented himself personally to Hadrat Wālā. Since he had given up his insistent request for bayʿah, and bearing in mind that he undertook such a lengthy journey despite being a poor man, and that his poverty may not permit him to undertake such a journey again, Hadrat Wālā himself fulfilled his wish.

A seeker is asked to write a promise

There was a seeker whose instruction was given over to one of Hadrat Wālā's deputies. He was desirous of bayʿah since many years and was also very eager to present gifts to Hadrat Wālā. However, due to his lack of understanding, nonchalance and extremist beliefs, he used to constantly vex Hadrat Wālā with his stupidities. Hadrat Wālā eventually felt an extreme need to distance the seeker completely from customary gifts and bayʿah. He therefore instructed him to write a promise that he will never present a gift nor make any request for bayʿah for the rest of his life. Hadrat Wālā then expressed his thoughts to some of his attendants by saying: "He was fully immersed in those matters [gifts and bayʿah]. He will now remain focussed to his task and, Allāh willing, he will benefit tremendously." Hadrat Wālā added: "If I see that he has settled down and become focussed, I myself will accept his bayʿah."

Some people pledge bay'ah after their training

I know of some people who confined themselves to learning the path from Hadrat Wālā for up to ten years. During this entire period they never got the courage to request bayʿah nor did they see any need for it because they had been constantly hearing from Hadrat Wālā that bayʿah was not essential. One day, when they came to meet Hadrat Wālā, the thought of bayʿah suddenly crossed their minds. After consulting their friends they presented their request to Hadrat Wālā. He said: "I always assumed that you had already pledged bayʿah to me. There is no need for bayʿah in such a situation, but if it is your wish, I will accept your bayʿah most happily because the thing which I had been waiting for – i.e. mutual affinity and correctness in beliefs – that, by Allāh's grace, is found. How, then, can I refuse?" Hadrat Wālā accepted their bayʿah and, by Allāh's grace, they are also his khulafā'.

Bay'ah after appointing a person as his khalīfah

Similarly there were some people who continued their training under Hadrat Wālā until he gave them permission to induct their own murīds. That is when they said to him: "Hadrat has not honoured me with my own bayʿah as yet." Subsequently, Hadrat Wālā accepted their bayʿah after having appointed them as his khulafā'.

Mere bay'ah is not enough

Hadrat Wālā constantly impressed on the minds – both by informing his associates and by practical demonstration – that reaching one's objective [Allāh *taʿālā*] is not dependent on bayʿah. Rather, mere training is sufficient to realize one's objective. On the other hand, bayʿah alone is definitely not enough.

The form and the reality of bay'ah

Just yesterday Hadrat Wālā was explaining that the form of bayʿah is like grass growing among a bed of flowers. It certainly creates an attractiveness and the flowers appear more splendorous, but the grass has nothing to do with the growth and flourishing of the flowers. If the grass was not planted among the bed of flowers, if only the flower seeds were planted, the flowers will still sprout with their original qualities and all their splendour. The absence of the grass will not cause any defect in the essential qualities of the flowers.

Some time ago, Hadrat Wālā clearly explained the reality of bayʿah to a seeker. It is quoted verbatim from *Husn al-ʿAzīz* so that all matters related to bayʿah may be presented to the reader. Hadrat Wālā said: "Bayʿah has a form and a reality. Its form is not the objective, its reality is."

The reality of bayʿah is to have full confidence and utter reliance on the one who is instructing you. In other words, the person must be convinced that this person is my well-wisher and whatever advice he gives me will be most beneficial for me. The person must be fully satisfied with him and he must never allow his own opinion to interfere with his mentor's prescription and diagnosis. The relationship must be like it is with an expert physician and benefactor. As for the form of bayʿah, it is not beneficial for the elite right at the beginning. However, it is beneficial for the masses at the very beginning

because it creates an awe and respect in their hearts towards the person. Consequently, they consider his statements to be weighty and feel compelled to act on them.

Bayʿah is beneficial for the elite after some time because one of the effects of bayʿah is that it creates a special bond between both parties. The shaykh realizes that this person is mine, and the murīd realizes that the shaykh is mine – there is no state of uncertainty between them. When a person goes repeatedly to the same doctor, the doctor begins to feel that this is my patient. He will also say to others: "This is my man." The patient also considers the doctor to be his. But if a patient jumps from one doctor to another, none of them will show any affection towards him. Each doctor will feel that he does not have any special bond with me because he comes to me and also goes to such and such doctors.

This benefit is not experienced by the elite at the very beginning. It is only realized when there is total affinity and satisfaction on both sides. When this condition is not realized, it is absolutely useless to pledge or accept bayʿah.

An enjoyable bay'ah

Hadrat Wālā said: "Bayʿah can only be enjoyed when a person first receives training and then pledges bayʿah. When he benefits from his mentor's training, it will develop love for him. Once love develops, the joy which is experienced in the bayʿah can never be experienced in the case where bayʿah took place before the training [and before the development of love]. This can be understood from the following example: One form of marriage is when a father and mother got their child married to whomever they wanted. The bond between the newly weds only developed after the marriage. The other form is that a person incidentally fell in love with another. The two adhered strictly to the limits of chastity [having no contact between themselves], and continued making efforts to get married. After much efforts, severe discomforts, a long wait, many high hopes, intense supplications to Allāh, the two succeeded and got married. There will be a world of difference in the joy that will be experienced in these two marriages.

The wisdom behind delaying bay'ah

Hadrat Wālā explained the wisdom behind delaying bayʿah: "When a seeker has a hope for bayʿah, he endeavours to the

utmost towards his own rectification and developing affinity. Had his request for bayʿah been accepted immediately, he will become unconcerned."

In short, Hadrat Wālā is very concerned about rectifying the incorrect and extremist beliefs which people have about bayʿah. After all, to elevate the rank of something beyond what it actually is, is also a bidʿah.

Bay'ah and training are not combined

Even after setting right a person's beliefs with regard to bayʿah, Hadrat Wālā generally abstained from combining bayʿah and training in the beginning. If he accepted a person's bayʿah, he would hand over the person's training to one of his khulafā'. If he took it upon himself to see to the person's training, he would not accept his bayʿah. This is how he did this: He would ask a student: "Do you want to pledge bayʿah or do you want to study?" He would add: "I do not combine bayʿah with training." If the person requests bayʿah, Hadrat Wālā would conclude that the person lacks understanding. If not, he would have requested the essential objective, viz. training. In such a case, even if he was permitted to study under him, there was a strong possibility of causing harm to Hadrat Wālā. Therefore, after fulfilling the necessary conditions – which, Allāh willing, will be listed later on – Hadrat Wālā delegates the person's training to one of his khulafā' and accepts the person's bayʿah. If the person requests training, it is most likely that he is of sound understanding and that he is in quest of the real objective. The person is therefore given permission to engage in educational correspondence with Hadrat Wālā. But if after a bit of correspondence, it is proven that he was wrong about the person's sound understanding, Hadrat Wālā delegates him to one of his khulafā'. As long as the khalīfah does not attest to the person's capability of being trained by Hadrat Wālā, he would leave him with the khalīfah.

Furthermore, as long as Hadrat Wālā is not fully satisfied after studying the correspondence between his khalīfah and the person, he does not permit him to be trained under him. Hadrat Wālā is extremely fastidious with a very fine temperament. In the case where he permitted the combination of bayʿah with training from the very beginning, the inconsistencies and unprincipled actions of the seekers would cause him immense harm. A relationship which is untenable –

especially after bayʿah – and because the displeasure of the shaykh is a venomous poison for a murīd, Hadrat Wālā's above-described practice stems solely out of concern for the well-being of the seekers and is in total conformity with correct principles. A few details with regard to Hadrat Wālā's system are presented. When a seeker reverts to Hadrat Wālā – whether verbally, via correspondence, by presenting himself or in abstentia – then, apart for certain situations where he is fully satisfied, he presents the seeker with a printed page containing the prerequisites for bayʿah without training, and training without bayʿah. They are:

Prerequisites for bay'ah without training

1. Whatever amount of the Qur'ān was read or memorized must be corrected under an expert in the recitation of the Qur'ān.
2. Seven parts or all the parts of *Bahishtī Zewar*, *Bahishtī Gauhar, Islāh ar-Rusūm* and the notes to *Qasd as-Sabīl* will have to be read personally or heard from someone, and adhered to strictly.
3. My printed lectures will have to be read or listened to all the time.
4. Initial instruction and training will have to be obtained from one of my khulafā' (whom I will appoint or whom the seeker will name and I will approve of). As long as the seeker has not corresponded with my khalīfah twenty five times, he must not ask me to train and teach him directly.

Prerequisites for training without bay'ah

If the seeker does not insist on bayʿah at present, but wants to be trained and taught first, he will have to adhere to the first three prerequisites only. The fourth condition will not apply. Then once a strong affinity is established, there is no objection to requesting for bayʿah.

Note: Bayʿah and training cannot be combined in the beginning. (Ashraf ʿAlī)

A reply to each of the above-mentioned prerequisites are individually asked from the seeker, and Hadrat Wālā would not pass a decision until he is fully satisfied that the seeker fully

understood whatever he wrote. Furthermore, while the seeker is living in the Khānqāh, Hadrat Wālā does not permit him to speak anything about bayʿah or training, nor is he permitted to write anything about it. Instead, he hands over the page containing the prerequisites to the seeker and says: "If you need to write anything about it, you must only do so when you reach your house. I will then reply accordingly."

This procedure was adopted because many newcomers give unprincipled replies which cause Hadrat Wālā immense discomfort. This results in mutual ill-feeling. As for the reason for prohibiting written replies while staying in the Khānqāh, it is because when a person is present in the Khānqāh, he has a natural urge to ask verbally about his written mistakes. This results in the same ill-feeling which Hadrat Wālā wanted to avoid in the first place.

Accepting bay'ah without training

A letter is written to those whose requests for bayʿah without training are to be accepted after the period of correspondence. Hadrat Wālā writes to them: "You must send this letter of mine to such and such khalīfah and commence your training under him. When he sends his letter of training together with this letter of mine, and a request for bayʿah is made, I will accept it." When the person does this, Hadrat Wālā accepts his bayʿah without hesitation. However, this bayʿah is accepted via a letter. He does not permit anyone to undertake a journey to him solely for the sake of bayʿah because this objective can be realized without undertaking a journey. Those who are honoured with bayʿah without training are not permitted any educational correspondence. They can only write for the sake of requesting supplications and enquiring about Hadrat Wālā's well-being. This treatment is for those who desire bayʿah without training.

A clarification: Hadrat Wālā is most pleased by those sound-minded seekers who read the above-mentioned prerequisites and still request training without bayʿah. This is because they gave preference to training – which is the objective – over mere bayʿah. They are given permission for educational correspondence.

A course of action for the unprincipled ones

If, in the course of correspondence, they do not used their brains and intelligence, write down unprincipled things and thereby vex Hadrat Wālā, and he does not expect to develop affinity quickly with them, then for the good of both parties, Hadrat Wālā instructs them to get trained under one of his khulafā'. He adds in his letter: "If you want to know the address of any such khalīfah, I will tell you." When the person asks for it, Hadrat Wālā provides it to him. He does not provide it on his own or if he is not asked. He does this so that the tutor is not disregarded and disrespected. Hadrat Wālā is very particular on this point in all matters. He pays particular attention to the dignity of the path and the objective – they must not be disregarded in any way. As long as he does not see a genuine quest in a seeker, he does not pay any attention to him.

If a person vexes Hadrat Wālā in the course of educational correspondence, he appoints one of his khulafā' to undertake his training. In most cases, the rectification which he has to go through takes the form of strict warnings. If these do not have any effect, the person is prohibited from correspondence. He then seeks pardon either directly or through an intermediary. In most cases, he gets permission to seek an indirect pardon either verbally or by correspondence. This is because many foolish mistakes are made even when seeking pardon. Since there was no intermediary, it causes ill feeling which is even more than what it was previously. However, the intermediary is only permitted to convey a message and not to act as an advocate. It is strictly prohibited to give any counsel to the person or to intercede on his behalf. If an intermediary breaks this rule, he himself is reprimanded. The seeker then has to look for another intermediary. This occurs very rarely because all those who are with Hadrat Wālā are fully aware of all these principles. No one has the courage to act to the contrary.

Seekers who are not expected to abstain from vexing Hadrat Wālā in their correspondence are pardoned by him but on condition that they do not maintain any programme of training under him. However, even in this case, he – out of his concern for their welfare – writes: "It is essential to get yourself reformed and rectified under all conditions. If you ask me for information about another mentor, I will certainly inform you."

If the seeker requests such information, Hadrat Wālā gives it to him. If the seeker expresses his special inclination towards a particular mentor, Hadrat Wālā appoints the same mentor in most cases. If not, he himself appoints someone whom he considers will be best suited to the seeker. When appointing a mentor, Hadrat Wālā sometimes takes into consideration how close the seeker lives from the mentor and other factors as well. If those whom Hadrat Wālā hands over to another mentor because of the harms which they caused him ask him permission to correspond with him solely for the sake of requesting his prayers and enquiring about him, then Hadrat Wālā grants permission. However, he first makes them write a note and signs it, and says: Every time you write to me, you must copy whatever this note contains. Don't add or subtract a word from it. This original note must also be sent on each occasion so that it can be compared with what you copied."

This condition was attached because there were some seekers who, while asking Hadrat Wālā about his well-being and requesting his prayers, added other points to the letter, causing him harm.

The reason for laying down rules

By Allāh's will, whatever Hadrat Wālā did was most regular and principled. At the same time, he used to say this repeatedly: "I am not over enthusiastic about organizational matters. In fact, I am quite terrified by them because I have a liberal temperament. However, where there is a need and no work can be accomplished without proper systems, then I have to be particular about organization and become a supervisor. In fact, where there is such a need, then instead of experiencing hardship and terror from organizational matters, I experience real joy and interest. I did not lay down these rules unnecessarily by thinking of each of them from before hand. Instead, they were developed and formulated gradually according to people's interactions with me. Allāh forbid – do you think I have a needless desire to lay down rules and place restrictions on people? In fact, by Allāh, I feel ashamed to lay down certain rules and regulations and I think to myself: 'What are these useless rules like the courts?' But what else can I do, necessity compels me into laying them down."

The purpose of rules and regulations

"My sole objective in laying down rules and regulations is so that neither am I harmed in any way nor are any person's needs left unfulfilled. Had these rules not been laid down, there would have been much disorganization. I would not have been at rest and people's works would not be fulfilled. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, both wisdoms are being realized. My rules are absolutely easy in themselves. I myself adhere strictly to them and ensure others adhere strictly to them. It is only this strict adherence which frightens people. Whereas – without intending a similarity – the same is the case with the rules of the Sharīʿah. They are absolutely easy in themselves. There are explicit texts which prove their easiness. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself says:

يُرِيْدُ اللهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ، وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ.

Allāh wills ease for you, He does not want difficulty for you. He did not place any hardship for you in Dīn.[1]

A Hadīth states: "Dīn is easy."

However, adherence to the Sharīʿah is strict and there are serious warnings in the case of non-adherence.

For example, salāh on the basis of its fundamentals and prerequisites is very easy. In the case where a person has valid excuses, even more concessions are provided. However, adherence to it and fulfilling it is implemented with absolute strictness. Abandoning it results in severe warnings and punishments in this world and in the Hereafter. Some Imāms have gone to the extent of issuing a fatwā of a death sentence for the person who casts aside salāh. Others issued a fatwā of permanent imprisonment. All these are punishments in this world. As for the Hereafter, a discarder of salāh is threatened with entry into the Hell-fire with Pharaoh and Hāmān. In short, we can certainly not consider a law to be strict when it is easy in itself while adherence to it is implemented strictly."

Natural affinity and unity in creed are essential

Hadrat Wālā never accepts the bayʿah of a person if he perceives a barrier in his heart towards him. This is

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 185.

irrespective of whether it is because of a difference in temperaments, difference in creed or because the person holds a certain position of authority. As for differences in temperaments, he refuses bayʿah with such people almost every other day. In fact, he would even delegate the person's training and instruction to others. This was explained in detail previously. The reason for this is that Allāh *taʿālā* created Hadrat Wālā with an extremely fine temperament and an intensely sharp perception. His engagement in dhikr and concern increased these qualities even more. Therefore, the slightest insolence on the part of the seekers causes him immense discomfort. However, this only applies to insolence which stems from disregard, inattention and lack of respect for the path. Apart from this, many villagers come to Hadrat Wālā and speak to him in an uncouth and boorish manner. Instead of getting angry at them, he thoroughly enjoys their ways of speech and very often relates theirs stories which are marked by informalities and simplicity. On one hand we see Hadrat Wālā's fine temperament and sharp perception, and on the other side we find people by and large extremely disorganized and unprincipled. It is most probably out of a need for reformation of the masses that Allāh *taʿālā* commissioned such a reformer who is appropriate to his times. This is why we see that in the beginning, he has very little affinity with the seekers. This is the overriding reason for hesitating and delaying in accepting their bayʿah and undertaking their training and instruction. He never accepts it unless he is fully convinced and at ease, and is fully satisfied about mutual affinity.

Each person must go to the one with whom he has affinity

Just in yesterday's assembly he was speaking about his system and saying: "Why should I not scold, reprimand and chase away those who cause me harm because of an absence of affinity? After all, even mosquitoes are smoked and chased away. If they are not chased away in this manner, they will all assemble and vex a person." One of Hadrat Wālā's special associates who was quite informal with him and was also an ʿālim said: "Hadrat, why should they be left to remain evil [by chasing them away]? Why not rectify them and put them right?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Every person cannot rectify every person. Rectification centres around affinity. It is possible for a person to have no affinity with me, but has it with someone

else. Therefore, each person must go to the one with whom he has affinity provided the person to whom he goes is a genuine person."

The different attitudes of the elders

Based on the above, I now quote an old statement of Hadrat Wālā from *Husn al-ʿAzīz*. Hadrat Wālā was speaking about the differences in attitudes of the elders so I asked: "Is piety of different types?" He replied: "Piety in itself is not different, however, natural tendencies which come from birth, e.g. fastidiousness, forbearance, weak forbearance, organization, disorganization, etc. cause differences in the attitudes of the elders."

Hadrat Wālā also said with regard to his style of organization: "This was not the style of your elders and other elders." I replied: "The same can be said about Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* as well. There was no penal law and punishment for drinking alcohol during the era of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. There was only chastisement and reprimand." Why did Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* promulgate a punishment instead of a reprimand? The answer that is given to his situation will be given to my situation as well. That is, there was general peace in the temperaments of people so incidents of this nature were few. A mere reprimand was sufficient; there was no need to promulgate a specific type of punishment. But when temperaments changed later on and incidents of this type increased, a need arose for the promulgation of a punishment. So what [Hadrat ʿUmar] Fārūq did, a Fārūqī[1] did the same."

In short, when Hadrat Wālā delegates some people for a certain period and others permanently to some of his khulafā', he does it because of this very same reason of absence of affinity in temperaments. Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "Matters which are generally considered light are most unacceptable to me. This is because my gaze goes immediately to the causes and effects, e.g. lack of forethought, inattention, absence of a genuine quest, and so on. However, others, due to special temperaments, are not affected in general. Alternatively, they

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[1] Hadrat Wālā was a descendent of Hadrat ʿUmar Fārūq *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, this is why he is referring to himself as a Fārūqī.

may be displeased, but since this job is not done elsewhere with as much attention – because the other elders are occupied in other important tasks – it is possible that such incidents are rare over there and occasional incidents of displeasure are accommodated.”

The job of a shaykh

It is for the benefit of the seekers to hand them over to others until they are able to observe the rules of etiquette. When Hadrat Wālā reprimanded a few newly-arrived seekers for their ill-mannered ways, they said as a way of an excuse: “Hadrat, we have, after all, come to learn manners and to rectify and reform ourselves. If we have no manners, we request Hadrat to rectify them and to teach us how to behave.”

Hadrat Wālā replied: “There are many departments for rectification, how many can I rectify? Tomorrow you will go to the pond and undress yourself and then tell me to teach you how to wash your private parts. It is not my responsibility to rectify every single matter – only those which are beyond your understanding, and which are so intricate that even if you ponder and think over them, you cannot fathom them. These easy and simple points with regard to manners, etiquette, saving yourself from causing harm to others are extremely easy and simple. If a person thinks about them, he will realize and learn them very easily. These matters ought to be learnt at home before coming here. To what extent can I continue teaching these points? If I were to accommodate all this and start teaching these points, I will never get the opportunity to teach the actual objective. All the time will be spent on these side issues.”

Refusal to accept bay’ah because of doctrinal differences

The above discussion concerned differences between teacher and student as regards temperaments. As for differences in creed, Hadrat Wālā does not accept bayʿah nor training and rectification until the entire issue is made totally clear. He does this so that there is no ill-feeling or misunderstanding later on. There were several such occasions in the past and are still experienced to this day where bidʿatīs, Ahl al-Hadīth, Ahl al-Qur’ān, and even Qādiyānīs and Hindus reverted to him. Some of them came personally to meet him while others wrote to him. Some of them contacted him to remove doubts about those who

were on the truth, others for the sake of learning the path. However, Hadrat Wālā clearly expressed his creed to them at the very beginning and did not hesitate in the least in expressing the truth to them. If any non-Muslim came to him to learn the path [of Sufism], he would inform him clearly but in a very refined and cultured manner without hurting his feelings in any way that Islam is a prerequisite for it.

An incident concerning a Maulānā

A Maulānā who had pledged bayʿah to an extremist bidʿatī shaykh came to Hadrat Wālā after his own shaykh passed away. He came with the intention of staying in the Khānqāh. After learning all these facts, Hadrat Wālā frankly said to him: "Maulānā! It would have been better had you informed me of all these things via a letter because you will hear something terrifying here: There is a world of difference between our creed and the creed of your previous shaykh. He even went to the extent of labelling me an unbeliever. If you considered him to be a scholar, how can you expect to rectify yourself from a person whom he considered to be an unbeliever? And if you do not consider me to be an unbeliever, you will have to consider him to be misguided. If a person considers a Muslim to be an unbeliever, will he not be misguided? [He will certainly be]. And it will be extremely difficult for you to consider him [your previous shaykh] to be misguided. If you think you can consider me to be partially right and him to be partially right, it will not work in this path. This is why I say that these matters ought to be resolved via correspondence first [before coming here]. You have now fallen into a dilemma because you undertook such a long journey. It will also be difficult for you to go back. If you remain here, how will you benefit from a person regarding whom your own mentor considered to be an unbeliever?...[1]

In short, Hadrat Wālā made clear all matters. He did this solely because the Maulānā wanted to establish a bond of training and instruction with Hadrat Wālā, in which, the slightest barrier will prevent him from reaching his objective. Normally Hadrat Wālā does not utter a single word against a person holding the most deviant of beliefs without any genuine Sharʿī need. He considers it most deplorable and unacceptable to hurt

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[1] Part of an extract from *Husn al-ʿAzīz*, vol. 1.

anyone's feelings unnecessarily. Hadrat Wālā took these precautions because that shaykh was extremely fanatical and extremist, and considered anyone who was opposed to his creed to be an unbeliever. As for those whose thinking was different but beliefs were not so extremist, Hadrat Wālā happily accepted their murīds after their demise and brought them under his training and instruction. They have now come in line with Hadrat Wālā's ways of thinking and continue reaping benefits from him to the extent that some of them have also been appointed as his khulafā'.

The story of an elder's son

The son of a similar shaykh requested Hadrat Wālā to take him under his wing of spiritual training. While taking full consideration to according him utmost respect, Hadrat Wālā drew subtle reference to his creed without declining his service. Hadrat Wālā wrote: "I was most happy to read about your attention towards your rectification. This is in itself a great diagnosis. However, the method which you desire – which is similar to a medical prescription - makes me feel quite ashamed. The latter overwhelms my previously mentioned happiness. What am I [I am nothing] to have the audacity of accepting such a great service. At the same time, I am more ashamed not to lend an ear to what you request. At present, there is a general deficiency in the knowledge, practice, conditions and desired attention among the spiritual masters. There is a possibility of some harm if I were to direct you towards them, and this bond does not permit me to do this. In order to come out and also remove you from this conflict, an in-between approach comes to my mind. You may come and stay in my company for a few days. If you find it beneficial, you may remain here permanently. If not, you may go elsewhere. Before deciding to come and remain in my company, also think about the fact that I have been maligned as regards my beliefs and character. Was salām."

Interaction with Ghayr Muqallids

Hadrat Wālā also accepted moderate and non-radical Ghayr Muqallids under his training if they requested it. In fact, he even inducted some of them as his murīds after seeing their persistence and enthusiasm. His criterion to gauge whether the person was fanatical and extremist or not was that if any of them requested bay'ah or spiritual training, he would first ask

him: “Do you consider the Taqlīd of the Imāms as practised by the entire Muslim nation to be permissible or not?” If he replied that he considered it permissible, Hadrat Wālā would ask him: “What do you think of those who consider it to be unlawful?” If the person responded to the first question by saying that he considers Taqlīd to be unlawful, Hadrat Wālā would say to him: “I myself am a Muqallid. And if you believe that I am committing an unlawful act, how can it be permissible for you to pledge bayʿah to me or to acquire Dīnī benefit from me?”

Just the other day Hadrat Wālā received a letter from a Ahl al-Hadīth brother who wrote: “I am blind, I request you to guide and steer me.” Hadrat Wālā replied: “Do you consider Taqlīd to be permissible or unlawful? If you consider it unlawful while I consider it permissible – in fact, obligatory to a certain extent – then in such a case, according to your belief, I am more blind than you. How can a blind man show the path to another blind person? If you consider Taqlīd to be permissible, what do you think of those who consider it unlawful? We have to decide on this first?”

Even if a seeker is of the Ahl al-Hadīth but does not consider the above-mentioned Taqlīd to be unlawful, does not speak ill of or does not harbour bad thoughts about the jurists and Imāms, then Hadrat Wālā does not refuse to train and instruct him. In fact, he does not even refuse to induct him into the spiritual family. There are several Ahl al-Hadīth brothers who presently have both types of relationships with him. Although some of them gave up their former creed after establishing a bond with Hadrat Wālā and chose to lead their lives within Taqlīd, Hadrat Wālā never indicated to them – neither by reference nor indication – nor advised them to give up their creed. In fact, one such Ahl al-Hadīth brother who had come to the Khānqāh, did not say the āmīn loudly in one of the salāhs[1] which are performed loudly. Hadrat Wālā thought that he probably abstained from saying it loudly out of consideration to where he was. Hadrat Wālā therefore said to the person with whom this brother had come: “He did not say āmīn loudly out of consideration for us. Go and put his mind at rest that there is no one here who would stop him or reprimand him. He can

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[1] This refers to saying āmīn loudly when the imām of salāh completes the recitation of Sūrah al-Fātihah.

continue on his creed with full freedom. He must never feel restricted."

When the person was informed, he replied: "No, it is my habit to say āmīn loudly sometimes and softly at other times even when I am at my own place."

Thus we see that Hadrat Wālā was never restrictive on these issues. In fact, he used to say: "If an Ahl al-Hadīth brother does not consider Taqlīd to be unlawful, does not speak ill of the elders and does not harbour evil thoughts about them, well and good. This has been the creed of some of the past scholars. So I too am not restrictive in this regard. Yes, it is another manner about whether our hearts will join completely or not."

Certain deviated people

Some Qādiyānīs and Aryans wanted to clear some of their doubts and misgivings, so they requested permission to stay over. Hadrat Wālā granted them permission, but when he came to know of their evil motives and saw them going out and propagating their beliefs, he expelled them without any consideration and concession.

In short, Hadrat Wālā's approach is exactly as is expected of an erudite scholar. He neither transgresses the bounds, falls short, is neither open-minded in the wrong places, nor unduly restrictive. Instead, there is balance in every matter, and this is the essence of the straight path.

People of authority and influence

We described Hadrat Wālā's approach to bay'ah and spiritual training with people of differing temperaments and creeds and beliefs. Allāh willing, we hope to complete this discussion – which is becoming quite lengthy – by describing his approach and interaction with people of authority and influence. If Hadrat Wālā was not yet fully open with such people due to which he could not apprise of them of certain matters pertaining to their rectification, he would not establish any bond with them. Some Nawābs and even some governors tried their utmost to establish special links with Hadrat Wālā but he excused himself. However, he did this in a very cultured manner while fully upholding the protocol which is expected when dealing with such people. Hadrat Wālā explains the reason for it as follows: "One should not take the responsibility

of training and tutoring a person as long as one does not find one's heart so open that if he is not able to tell him that he is unworthy, he should at least be able to tell him that his action was inappropriate. If one cannot say even this much, no rectification of the person will be realized, and he will not derive any benefit from this relationship."

One of Hadrat Wālā's special associates who was also his khalīfah asked: "Hadrat, if that is the case, how can these people derive any benefit?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "The choice is actually theirs. They must interact in a manner which causes my heart to open fully towards them so that I can say whatever I want to them. It has been experienced that the heart opens up with interaction."

Another statement of Hadrat Wālā just came to mind. He said: "Some dervishes unnecessarily adopt a severe attitude towards rulers and people of authority. However, our Hadrat Hājī Sāhib disapproved of this. Instead, he used to say: "To adopt such an attitude unnecessarily is pride." This is why my practice towards them is neither one of flattery and cajoling, nor one of despising. Instead, I adopt a middle way which also ensures giving consideration to their rank and position. The reason for this is that when they are used to a particular manner of treatment and expect it, then it is necessary to give consideration to it according to necessity. This is done so that their feelings are not hurt. However, if they do something which is unacceptable, especially where there is an indication of despising or scorning people of Dīn, then I give no concession and consideration whatsoever to them."

A reply to the request of a police officer

Some distinguished people and people of authority requested bayʿah from Hadrat Wālā. He penned all matters in this regard in clear and no uncertain terms, but at the same time adopted absolute subtleness, firmness and decorum.

A police officer who was stationed in Thānah Bhawan made an earnest and sincere verbal request for bayʿah. Hadrat Wālā had several points about bayʿah which needed to be attached before the actual acceptance of the bayʿah and wanted to clarify certain matters, so instead of saying anything to him immediately, he said: "Allāh willing, I will write something

down in this regard and send it to you.” Hadrat Wālā then sent the following letter to him.

You expressed your desire to serve me out of your love for me. Although I am not worthy of it, I do not reject any service from my beloveds. However, since there are no formalities between us, I would like to draw your attention to the following points for your own welfare. In this way, you will be able to come to a decision with insight and all misunderstanding may be removed. I am prepared to accept whatever decision you come to after this.

1. I am an ordinary “dry” student. I have nothing to do with those matters which are currently considered to be the essentials of Sufism, e.g. mīlād functions, ʿurs, igyārwī, nayāz, fātihah, qawwālī and other similar practices. I prefer keeping my associates on this “dry” system.

2. I am not a man of expositions, supernatural feats, one who can impose his influence and control over others, nor an ʿāmil. All I do is inform my associates of the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

3. I do not have any formalities with my associates. I do not conceal my condition. I do not compel anyone to obey my counsel, advice and to practise on matters related to Dīn. I am pleased when a person does good and saddened by a person staying aloof from doing good.

4. I neither make any demand from anyone nor do I intercede on anyone’s behalf. This is why some people consider me to be a “dry” person. By nature, I do not cause harm to anyone by giving concessions to one over another.

5. The point which I consider most important for myself and for my friends is that no harm must be caused to anyone, whether physical in the form of hitting and beating, monetary in the form of trampling someone’s rights or taking away something wrongfully, whether it comes to the honour of a person, e.g. despising a person,

backbiting him, or whether it is with regard to the self, e.g. causing apprehension to a person, an interaction which causes ill-feeling and grief. If any of this is committed mistakenly, there must be no hesitation in seeking pardon.

6. I am so particular about the previous point that if I see a person's outward appearance against the Sharīʿah, I will complain about it, while shortcomings with regard to the previous point cause me immense pain and I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to relieve me of them. These six points concern myself. There are some points which concern you, and deserve more attention on your part.

7. If you do anything which displeases another, e.g. in matters of administration, it is possible that although it is not against the Sharīʿah, it will be an occasion for the other party to use it as an opportunity to make objections. He will say that you are following the Sufi way yet you are acting against it. Together with this, he will accuse me of not stopping you from doing what you did.

8. Some people will request me to intercede before you and, as per point number four, I will excuse myself. They will certainly malign me for this, but then they will impose on you by mentioning your relationship with me and then requesting you to fulfil their needs. This will put you in a difficult spot and you will feel constrained. You must come to a decision by pondering over these points carefully. The safest way would be: (1) do not even consider me worthy of it [bayʿah]. If your heart does not accept this, (2) defer your intention for bayʿah for as long as you are stationed in Thānah Bhawan. If you do not accept this as well, (3) pledge the bayʿah in absolute secrecy without anyone coming to know of it. I just thought of two additional points which are written on the next page.

9. Although the rulers do not have any suspicions about me, people of evil intentions like to cause discord. For example, [bearing in mind that you are a police officer], a Muslim benefited legally

from you, or a Muslim was saved from the injustice of a non-Muslim through you. It is possible that a person of evil intentions will – out of his fanaticism – convey this to the leaders in a manner which creates a wrong impression and he will claim that you have contacts with such and such religious personality [me], therefore you did what you did out of your fanaticism towards me.

10. Alternatively, you might forward a Muslim criminal to a magistrate or rescue a Hindu from the injustices of a Muslim. An unintelligent Muslim may make this objection: Although he is aligned to a Sufi, he did not come to the defence of a Muslim, or, he came to the defence of a Hindu. You could experience such impositions and the only way you can avoid them is to consider the three points listed under point number eight.

Allāh forbid, I am not refusing but advising you out of consideration for your wellbeing and after thinking about what consequences your decision could have. A poet says:

"I have handed over my capital to you. You yourself can calculate the profits and losses."

Was salām
9 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1352 A.H./25 February 1934

I [the compiler] say: Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Wālā clearly explained his creed, and also apprised the police officer of all points which needed clarification in a very subtle manner without causing any ill feeling.

Concessions to the infirm and women

Hadrat Wālā was not too strict in accepting the bayʿah of sick people out of kindness towards them, and to women because they are not decisive in their opinions. However, based on many wisdoms and reasons, he severely detested women coming to Thānah Bhawan solely for the sake of bayʿah. This is because some women miss their salāh while travelling and it also becomes difficult for them to observe purdah/hijāb. Furthermore, crowds of women coming to Thānah Bhawan was also considered unwise. In most cases, Hadrat Wālā would

send women back without accepting their bayʿah by saying to them: "This [bayʿah] could have been accomplished by writing to me. If you still feel you want to pledge bayʿah, you must write to me when you return home. I will reply with whatever is most appropriate."

Another advantage of sending back these women without accepting their bayʿah is so that people would come to know about Hadrat Wālā's practice in this regard and it will put an end to their coming.

Women must obtain permission from their mahram

Hadrat Wālā would never accept bayʿah from women unless he received a clear permission from their husbands [in the case of married women] or from the mahram who was in charge of them [e.g. father, brother, uncle] in the case of unmarried women. This precondition had other advantages such as putting an end to women's free and liberal attitudes. Furthermore if the husband or the one in charge was of a different creed [or had affinity with someone else], it would cause constant fighting between them and the poor woman would become constrained.

Method of bay'ah for women

Hadrat Wālā accepts bayʿah from women from behind a curtain by holding a length of fabric or garment. At the time of accepting bayʿah, he would ensure the woman's mahram, his own wife or one of his own mahram women were present. He places a lot of emphasis on a curtain between himself and the woman. When he dictates the bayʿah to the woman and takes a promise of carrying out Allāh's orders and abstaining from His prohibitions, he instructs her thus: "Repeat what I say, but repeat it silently, not aloud."

Hadrat Wālā gives the same advice to women who speak to him from behind a curtain. When they pledge bayʿah to him, he teaches them the same thing so that respect for the Sufi path may be preserved. Similarly, old women who do not observe purdah with him are asked to sit behind a curtain when pledging bayʿah. Here too the purpose is to preserve the respect for the Sufi path.

Rules for accepting bay'ah while on a journey

Hadrat Wālā abstained from accepting bayʿah while on a journey unless they were special people with whom he already had previous contact or they were women because the latter are not decisive in their opinions. If anyone requested bayʿah, he would refuse because requesting bayʿah and accepting it are both inappropriate while on a journey. The reason for this is that both parties did not get an opportunity to observe each others actual condition. As long as the actual condition of both parties is not known and one is not fully at ease, neither should a murīd pledge bayʿah nor should a shaykh induct a murīd. He used to say: "This is not a transaction involving carrots and radish – where a person offers his money and receives carrots and radish in return."

Hadrat Wālā used to explain another reason for this practice. He used to say that people will learn to become wary of roving materialist Sufis. He used to say that another advantage of not accepting bayʿah unilaterally without any preconditions is that people must not consider bayʿah to be trivial. If they go elsewhere and find that bayʿah is accepted there without any preconditions, it will at least create a hesitance in their hearts and they will not extend their hands for bayʿah without thinking carefully.

Rules for those who are affiliated to someone else

Hadrat Wālā would generally refuse bayʿah from a person who had pledged bayʿah to someone who belonged to a genuine spiritual lineage and the latter shaykh passed away. He says to such a person: "The previous bayʿah with all its blessings is still intact. There is no need to renew your bayʿah. However, I am prepared to teach you the path."

However, since renewal of bayʿah in such a situation is also not against the path, if a person insists despite hearing what was said above and his heart is not pacified without bayʿah, and Hadrat Wālā too is satisfied that the person does not believe in its necessity, then he does not refuse. I myself know of a few persons whose bayʿah was accepted after they persisted.

If a person who had pledged bayʿah to a shaykh holding corrupt beliefs cancelled his previous bayʿah and pledges bayʿah at Hadrat Wālā's hands, he emphasises on him to never utter a single word of disrespect against his previous shaykh.

H͟ad͟rat Wālā says to the person: “Even if I speak ill of him, you must never say anything because he was the first one to direct you and place you on this path. He is therefore your benefactor. Although he showed you the wrong way, he instilled in you a desire for the objective [Allāh *taʿālā*]. Ungratefulness is most harmful in this path. This path is nothing but respect. Respect is the essence of this path. Nothing is more harmful than disrespect. In some instances, even sins are not as harmful because sins are connected to the Being who is pure from emotions. On the other hand, disrespect is connected to the shaykh who is a human and can be affected by disrespect. This could prove to be a fatal poison for a murīd.”

The reality of Sufism and duties of the seeker

There was a time when H͟ad͟rat Wālā used to give a printed page to those who sought bayʿah. It contained the reality of Sufism, and two lists of actions which had to be carried out and abstained from after entering the spiritual family. However, these lists were not intended to be complete lists. Instead, only those orders and prohibitions were listed which are generally neglected nowadays or which people are generally caught up in. It has been quite some time since copies of this page were printed, distributed and finished. However, it has been included as an addendum in *Qas͟d as-Sabīl*. It is quoted here verbatim.

The reality of the path

1. Neither are expositions nor supernatural feats necessary.
2. There is no guarantee of pardon on the day of Resurrection.
3. There is no promise of accomplishment of worldly desires, e.g. belief that one’s tasks will be accomplished through amulets, court cases will be won through prayers, there will be increase in sustenance, illnesses will be removed through spiritual healing or the future will be foretold.
4. Direct influence is not essential in the sense that a murīd will be reformed and rectified automatically through the shaykh, he will not even think of sins, acts

of worship will be carried out automatically, the murīd will not have to possess a lot of determination or that his memory will increase in matters concerning knowledge of Dīn and memorizing the Qur'ān.

5. There is no promise of such spiritual conditions where the person experiences joy all the time or at the time of worship, he does not experience any whisperings while occupied in worship, he is able to cry profusely, he becomes so immersed and engrossed that he forgets about his own self.
6. He will not necessarily see special effulgence or hear unseen voices while engaged in dhikr and spiritual practices.
7. It is not essential that he will have wonderful dreams or have genuine inspirations. Instead, the real objective is to please Allāh *taʿālā*, and the means of realizing this is to follow the injunctions of the Sharīʿah in totality.

Some of these injunctions are related to the external self. For example, salāh, fasting, hajj, zakāh, marriage, divorce, fulfilling of rights between husband and wife, oaths, expiation of oaths, buying and selling, court cases, testimony, bequests, distribution of inheritance, greeting, speaking with each other, eating, sleeping, sitting, standing, hospitality to guests and so on. All these are known as ʿilm al-fiqh – the science of jurisprudence.

There are others which are related to the internal self, e.g. love for Allāh *taʿālā*, fear of Allāh *taʿālā*, remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*, less love for this world, being pleased by the will of Allāh *taʿālā*, absence of greed, presence of heart in worship, carrying out works of Dīn with sincerity, abstaining from scorning anyone, absence of self-conceit, controlling one's anger, and so on. These characteristics are known as sulūk or Sufism. Like the external injunctions, it is compulsory and obligatory to practise on these internal injunctions.

In most cases internal shortcomings cause damage to external actions. For example, a lack of love for Allāh *taʿālā* results in laziness in performing salāh or performing it hastily. Miserliness causes one to lose enthusiasm to pay zakāh or perform hajj. Pride and overpowering of anger results in wronging another person or trampling his rights. Even if a

person is cautious with regard to external actions, as long as the self is not rectified, the caution does not last for more than a few days. The rectification of the self is therefore essential because of these two reasons. However, internal shortcomings and failings are poorly understood. Those that are understood, the method of setting them right are not known thoroughly. And those that are known cannot be practised because of the influence of the self. A qualified shaykh is prescribed for this purpose because he understands these failings, apprises the murīd of them, and also shows him how to treat them. In order to create some capability for the setting right of the self from within and to pave the way for the treatments to work effectively, certain forms of dhikr and spiritual practices are taught. Anyway, dhikr in itself is a form of worship. Finally, a seeker has to do two things: (1) One is essential, and that is to adhere to the external and internal injunctions of the Sharīʿah. (2) The other is desirable, and that is to be punctual and regular with dhikr. This will enable him to carry out injunctions through which he will gain Allāh's pleasure and proximity. Excessive dhikr will earn him even more pleasure and bring him closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is the gist and essence of the path and the destination.

The rights of the path

The following will have to be done upon entering the path[1]:

1. All eleven parts of *Bahishtī Zewar* from beginning to end will have to be read or heard word for word.
2. All your life conditions will have to be in line with *Bahishtī Zewar*.
3. If you need to do something and you do not know whether it is lawful or not, you will have to ask the genuine ʿulamāʾ before doing it, and then act according to what they say.
4. Perform all your five salāhs with congregation.[2] If you have a valid Sharʿī excuse, you do not have to perform them with congregation. If you leave it out without a

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[1] These rights are incumbent on every Muslim even if he or she has not pledged bayʿah to anyone.
[2] There is no congregation for women.

valid excuse due to your negligence, you must seek forgiveness with remorse.

5. If you have wealth which equals nisāb, you must pay zakāh. Rules in this regard can be found in *Bahishtī Zewar.* Similarly, one tenth and one twentieth of the produce of the land will have to be given as zakāh. Rules in this regard must be learnt verbally.
6. You will have to perform hajj if you have the means. Similarly, sadaqul fitr and qurbānī will have to be fulfilled if you have the means.
7. You will have to fulfil the rights of your wife and children. It is also their Dīnī right to constantly show them the injunctions of the Sharī'ah.

An easy way to implement the above for those who can read is to set aside a time in the morning and evening to read the *Bahishtī Zewar* to one's family members and to explain to them. This must continue until the book is completed from beginning to end. Once it is completed, start reading it again from the beginning. Continue reading the rules and regulations until you are able to remember them thoroughly. As for those who cannot read, they must make it a point of remembering whatever they hear from the 'ulamā' and then conveying it to their family members.

The following acts will have to be given up:

Shaving the beard; trimming it below the length of one fist; having different lengths of hair on the head; wearing trousers, pants or kurtas below the ankles; having the tail of a turban to hang more than half the length of the back; wearing clothes which are dyed with safflower, saffron or any impure dye; wearing silk or silk brocade which is broader than four finger's width or to make boys to wear the same; wearing clothes which are worn by unbelievers; men wearing silver rings which weigh one mithqāl or more, or gold rings [of any weight]; women wearing high-heeled shoes or men's style garments, jewellery which emits a jingling sound, very fine or tight clothing which shows the body shape. To look at a woman or man with an evil eye; to intermingle with women and young boys; for a man or woman to sit near a strange woman or man or to sit in privacy; for them to come in front of each other without any real need – even if it is one's shaykh or relative. If there is no real and

genuine need, it is prohibited to expose one's head, arms, forearms, calves and neck to strange men. It is better to remain dumb in the presence of men. It is most evil and detestable to come before them with attractive clothing and jewellery. Similarly, mutual laughing and joking between strange men and women, speaking more than necessary, etc. should be avoided. Intermingling on occasions of circumcision, 'aqīqah or weddings must also be avoided. There is no harm in assembling immediate male relatives at the actual time of nikāh. Any other act which smacks of pride, e.g. customary feeding of people must also be given up.

Extravagance and too many formalities with regard to clothing are also included in pride and ostentation. Screaming and crying over the deceased; holding the 10th day, 20th day, 40th day and other similar celebrations; walking behind the funeral procession from long distances; distributing the clothes of the deceased to the poor in a manner which is not in accordance with the Sharī'ah; depriving females from the inheritance; people of authority wronging the poor; making false accusations; making claims to inheritance; consuming the income of mortgages or bribery; taking or displaying photographs; keeping dogs as pets; taking part in fireworks, pigeon racing, cock-fighting and other frivolous activities; listening to music; taking part in 'urs functions; taking vows in the names of saints; participating in common day igyārwī functions; holding customary maulūd functions; intermingling of men and women on such occasions; cooking sweet dishes on the night of Barā'ah; mourning during the month of Muharram; making it a point of distributing something sweet on the completion of the Qur'ān in Ramadān; going to sorcerers and fortune tellers; backbiting; carrying tales; speaking lies; cheating in business; taking unlawful jobs without compulsion; being treacherous in lawful jobs. For a woman to be foul-mouthed to her husband; spending his wealth without permission; going somewhere without his permission. For memorizers of the Qur'ān to accept something [money, gifts] in exchange for reciting the Qur'ān at a grave or reciting it in the tarāwīh salāh. For 'ulamā' to accept payment for delivering talks or issuing fatāwā; or for them to fall into disputes and arguments. For people who are merely dressed like dervishes to desire having disciples or becoming involved in writing amulets.

This is a short list of dos and don'ts. Details can be found in my other writings.

Bay'ah in all four spiritual families

As per the unique and accepted practice of his shaykh, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, Hadrat Wālā used to admit the seekers into all four spiritual families so that a person will be affiliated to all the elders of the path and derive blessings from all. Furthermore, this will enable him to have confidence in the elders of all four spiritual families and abstain from giving preference to the elders of one lineage over those of the others. It is forbidden to do this because it results in scorning those of the other lineages. This is forbidden and also extremely dangerous. Having bad thoughts about the elders could well result in an evil death for the person. As for deprivation of their blessings, this is certain.

An open heart as regards bay'ah

In addition to all the above rules and preconditions, Hadrat Wālā also gave consideration to his own open heartedness as regards bayʿah. in fact, the acceptance of bayʿah was by and large dependent on the acceptance of his heart. He abstained from accepting bayʿah from seekers if his heart did not testify to their inherent capabilities, spiritual affinity and an attraction of the heart. In fact, such conditions would present themselves in these situations which would cause the person to withdraw himself and the correctness of the testimony of Hadrat Wālā's heart would be established and proven. Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "There are some who, when I merely look at them, my heart spontaneously desires that they must request bayʿah. Consequently, in most cases, when my heart desired this for any person, Allāh *taʿālā* Himself created an urge for bayʿah in his heart. The person would then request bayʿah and I would accept without hesitation."

Details with regard to the testimony of Hadrat Wālā's heart were provided previously. I am therefore sufficing with the above. I now conclude this section on "Principles Related to Bayʿah". If I think of any other principles in this regard later on, then – Allāh willing – I will include them under the section "Miscellaneous Principles".

Teachings are open to all, bay'ah is restricted

From the above points, the reader must have gauged that Hadrat Wālā did not believe in bayʿah just in name. Rather, he insisted on a bayʿah which was accompanied with striving. This is why he never tolerated hastiness in this regard. He says: "Accepting the bayʿah of a person entails adopting him as your son. As long as both parties are not convinced about their mutual affinity and agreement, you cannot adopt a person as your son. After all, this is a life-long relationship. However, when distributing sweetmeats, one does not confine himself to distributing them to his sons only. Rather, they are distributed among all the youngsters. In the same way, my teachings are open to everyone but bayʿah is restricted."

The benefit of adhering to rules and regulations

When old associates commit mistakes, Hadrat Wālā says: "Look! Despite all these precautions, there are so many different types of people who have become murīds. Had I been open [in accepting all and sundry], I do not know what the situation would have been. I would not be satisfied with anyone. By Allāh's grace, despite this there are very few of such people. This is the result of my restrictions. By Allāh's grace, those who are under me, I at least have confidence in them. If not, it would have been difficult to distinguish them. What is the benefit of merely adding to one's numbers? Do you think I want to mobilize an army of murīds? Of what benefit is there in mobilizing them when they will flee from the battlefield at the actual time of battle? In fact, when they flee, they may well cause others in whom I have confidence to flee as well."

Hadrat Wālā also says: "Even if the benefit of this path is not all embracing, it is at least – all thanks are due to Allāh – complete and perfect."

After providing full details about the bayʿah of a newly-arrived seeker, Hadrat Wālā said: "Since I am most appreciative of freedom, I give a full explanation about bayʿah and apprise the seeker that bayʿah has nothing to do with deriving benefit. A relationship of instruction and learning is most certainly enough because the freedom remains – if the person's heart becomes disinclined, he will be absolutely free to leave me. On the other hand, when a person pledges bayʿah, he causes himself to become tied down unnecessarily. If he wishes to go

elsewhere, then [although it is permissible] the prevailing attitude with regard to bayʿah prevents him from leaving."

The importance of bayʿah

A man requested bayʿah. Hadrat Wālā asked: "Where have you come from?" He replied: "I came for a wedding and decided to come here with the intention of pledging bayʿah to you." Hadrat Wālā said: "This is not something which is done by the way with other things. It is proof of disinterest. I will therefore not accept your bayʿah at present. You must make a special trip specifically for this purpose [of bayʿah]. I will speak to you then."

Unintentional offence to one's shaykh

Even unintentional offences to the shaykhs are detrimental. This is why excessive kindness is harmful. The more the kindness, the more people will offend the shaykh by their crude actions and this will cause grief over every small matter. I now explain another issue based on what I just said. I laid it down a few days ago and have been compelled to do it. However, people have not understood my compulsion as yet. You have already learnt that excessive kindness is harmful. Furthermore, you know the principle of:

مقدمة المكروه مكروه، ومقدمة الواجب واجب

A thing which is a cause of evil is also evil. A thing which is the means to an obligation is also obligatory.

Since we learnt that excessive kindness is harmful, the thing which is a cause of excessive kindness has to be given up. Thus, when I accept the bayʿah from a person, I am overcome by excessive kindness. This is why I stopped accepting bayʿah. Although it has something to do with a fatwā which was the fundamental of bayʿah, but people have exceeded the bounds in this regard as well. The essence of bayʿah is that a murīd pledges to obey, while the shaykh pledges kindness and rectification. However, people have exceeded the bounds, causing changes in beliefs and practices.

The changes in beliefs is that as long as they do not pledge bayʿah physically – by placing their hand in the hand of a shaykh – they consider a mere verbal pledge to be insufficient. This is why it is said to them: 'We will teach you and do

everything for your rectification’, but they are never prepared to accept this. As though piety is an electric current which will never run from one to another as long as they do not physically pledge bayʿah. If this was the case, our spiritual lineage would have been severed by now because there was a time when the spiritual masters had given up accepting bayʿah in this manner. They did this because in those days, the king used to enjoy obedience from his subjects. If a person were to pledge bayʿah at the hands of another, it would seem to be rebellion against the king and it would be assumed that the shaykh is also seeking kingdom. The spiritual masters of those days – fearing someone might spy them to the kings – gave up the system of physical bayʿah. They sufficed with a verbal agreement and continued teaching and instructing the murīd. Now you see, if bayʿah would not have been possible without this specific physical form, the entire spiritual lineage would have been cut off. If bayʿah [verbal] can be done, why should it be denied and why should a verbal agreement and instruction be considered insufficient? Is it not extremism in beliefs to consider a non-essential to be essential? It certainly is and has to be rectified.

There are two ways of doing this: (1) The physical bayʿah be maintained, and the person be verbally informed that the placing of your hand in the shaykh’s hand is an outward bayʿah. The real bayʿah is to do what he says. (2) The physical bayʿah be given up completely. Other elders may continue with it but because I become excessively kind after it, I will opt for the second option. In this way, extremism in beliefs will be rectified and so will its harms.

Abstaining from fighting and arguing

At the time of bayʿah, I prohibit the person from fighting and arguing with anyone. I noticed that when ignorant people start fighting and arguing, they open the doors to abuses being hurled against the pious elders. There can be only two situations: (1) The person will speak in praise of his elders, and I disapprove of this. A person is actually clutching at bones when he goes around speaking in praise of his elders unnecessarily. If a person has a need for a shaykh, he must go on his own and observe the shaykh for himself. What is the need for you to encourage him? (2) The person will speak ill of the pious elders. This is how it starts: People will speak about a

certain issue or ruling in the presence of a murīd. He will say that such and such pious elder has this to say with regard to that ruling. The rest of the people will now hurl abuses at the pious elder. What was the need for this murīd to make mention of his shaykh in the presence of enemies of the shaykh and to open the door for abuses to be hurled at him? In the first place, the murīd had no need whatsoever to go into a fervour to respond. Even if he did, there was no need to attribute the point to his shaykh. He could have confined it to himself. It is most immature to be overcome by fervour yourself and to then attribute it to your shaykh so that whatever is said thereafter is said against the shaykh and not to you.

Principles Related To Teaching And Training

Keeping the seeker subservient

In his programme of teaching and training, Hadrat Wālā was never subservient to the seeker but always kept the latter subservient to him. There is a lot of wisdom and good in this system which is clearly supported by the following verse:

لَوْ يُطِيْعُكُمْ فِيْ كَثِيْرٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ

Were he to follow you in many matters, you would suffer.[1]

Although Hadrat Wālā gave full consideration to his [seeker's] correct feelings, he never acceded to any and every right or wrong request, or replied to any haphazard question according to the seeker's wishes. In fact, he constantly says: "Most of my answers are not in line with the seeker's wishes, but – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – they are totally in accordance with his illness."

Hadrat Wālā's practice in answering a seeker's questions

I say: I witness this all the time and anyone who wishes can examine all incidents and conditions related to this subject that in treating every seeker and replying to his questions (which in the beginning – due to ignorance and lack of affinity with the path – are not only lengthy and detailed, but also contain futilities. Hadrat Wālā says in a very beautiful and subtle manner with reference to them: "I am not distressed by long letters, but those which are futile and useless.") Hadrat

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[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 7.

Wālā always poses factual and straightforward questions and silences the seeker so that he realizes his ignorance. According to Hadrat Wālā, realization of one's ignorance is the most beneficial knowledge. Hadrat Wālā seals off all other avenues and leaves the seeker with no other option. He surrounds him from all sides, places him on the main highway and conveys him to the essential destination. Allāh *ta'ālā* has blessed Hadrat Wālā with a unique ability – despite many lengthy and detailed letters containing various intermixed and confusing themes, he is able to fathom the reply to it with a single glance and his pen flows with a concise answer or poses questions which shifts the seeker away from non-objectives. As for the seeker's longwinded details and unnecessary themes, Hadrat Wālā renders them to smithereens like a small tremor which reduces huge mountains to dust.

Foolish people are distressed by Hadrat Wālā's questions

People who lack understanding are distressed by Hadrat Wālā's questions whereas they are not questions in themselves. They are actually answers because if a person has a little sound understanding, he can easily extract answers from those very questions. Hadrat Wālā's questions demand that the seeker continues writing to Hadrat Wālā on issues concerning his rectification. This is most essential. While on the subject of getting distressed by his questions, I recall an incident which occurred just yesterday. A person posed a very long and detailed question to Hadrat Wālā about a matter which was absolutely unnecessary. As per his norm, he wrote: "Is there any Dīnī objective dependent on this?" The person wrote back: "My objective is a Dīnī matter and it is solely to establish belief in the reality." Hadrat Wālā wrote the same answer: "Is this matter from among the essential beliefs?" The person felt offended and wrote back: "I posed the same question two times, but instead of providing an answer, you merely looked at my letter superficially and are now posing a question to me. I hope you will now give me a correct answer."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "My answer is the same – which I consider to be correct and you consider to be incorrect. It will be better if you pose your question to a scholar who is an expert in his knowledge, and subservient to you in his practice and actions."

After reading these questions and answers before his assembly, Hadrat Wālā addressed all who were present and said: "I do not

even feel offended by the statements of such foolish people. I consider it to be like a kick from an animal. If a person's animal kicks him, he will certainly be injured but he will not be offended because he knows that this is an animal, it has no intelligence, and that is why it kicked him. In fact, I take an oath in Allāh's name and say that I rejoice when such people feel offended because I am now freed from such foolish people. Had they continued their bond with me, they would have vexed me for the rest of my life."

A reply to a untimely question of a seeker

Coincidentally, another incident which supports Hadrat Wālā's practice of not being subservient to a seeker in matters concerning rectification and instead, makes him subservient to himself, took place yesterday. A seeker wrote to Hadrat Wālā with the following request: "I seek permission to engage in the twelve tasbīhs after I complete my tahajjud salāh." Hadrat Wālā replied: "If a person were to ask a doctor to permit him to take *khamīrah gā'ū zabān* which is taken by people, what reply will the doctor give?"

Look! It appears to be a beautiful request and who will normally refuse such a request? An immediate permission would have been given by other shaykhs. However, Hadrat Wālā is very particular about every matter being done at the right time and place, and he conveys a seeker through the levels of Sufism in a very sequenced manner. In this way, the seeker is protected from every type of misguidance and is able to traverse the path easily. He always says: "The first duty of a shaykh is to teach the reality of the path to the seeker and to place him on the right path so that all that is left for him to do is to tread it, continue walking without wandering off course and reaching his destination easily."

This is why instead of permitting the above-mentioned seeker to engage in the twelve tasbīhs, he posed a question which is actually the key to the path. Hadrat Wālā clarified the entire path of guidance and instruction to him by the example of a patient and doctor. In this way, he laid open the reality of the relationship between a shaykh and murīd. Although it is Hadrat Wālā's first question, it will serve as a guiding light for the entire period of this seeker's rectification. All future correspondences, learning, training, seeking information and so on will be based on this.

A shaykh/murīd relationship is like a doctor/patient relationship

Hadrat Wālā himself provides details to the above statement. He says: "The relationship between a shaykh and murīd is exactly like that of a doctor and patient. In this example, thousands of points can be applied."

At this point, we will only mention those applications which apply to our specific discussion. For example, it is the sole duty of a patient to relate everything about his sickness to his doctor, and then leave the examination, diagnosis, prescription, precautions and everything else to the doctor. The patient must neither give his own opinions nor interfere with his examination and prescription. He must also not seek his permission to take any specific medication because his request is absolutely inappropriate and totally in conflict with his position. Yes, he may explain his condition in full and then request for a treatment. The doctor will then prescribe whatever steps are necessary.

In exactly the same way, a spiritually sick person must describe his spiritual ailments to his spiritual doctor and have them treated. Firstly he must merely inform him of his spiritual conditions and request him for rectification. However, he must not give his own opinions about any aspect related to the diagnosis or prescription, not request any specific form of dhikr, nor any specific manner of removing an evil. He must leave the diagnosis and prescription totally to his shaykh. He must never interfere in this regard. His shaykh will ponder over his condition and prescribe a treatment which will suit him. If he needs further clarification of his conditions or further details, he will ask him appropriate questions and complete whatever defects had remained in this regard. He will then prescribe what to do. The murīd must then accept – without any hesitation or objection – whatever prescription and treatment he receives, and then practise on them with full confidence in his shaykh. He must continue informing his shaykh of his conditions after practising on his prescriptions. In fact, even if he does not experience any new condition, he must still inform his shaykh because this is a condition in itself. The murīd must also adhere strictly to whatever changes, alterations, additions, subtractions and cancellations to his conditions which are made periodically by his shaykh. He must

maintain this procedure for the rest of his life. Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> Continue digging and ploughing in this path and do not allow yourself to take a single break for even a moment.

Hadrat Wālā has coined four rhyming words in order to make it easy for a person to remember the above. They are: *ittilā' aur ittibā'* and *i'tiqād aur inqiyād*.

By Hadrat Wālā giving the example of a doctor and patient in the above-quoted reply, he gave to the seeker an entire programme of action and clearly demonstrated to him that the way which he adopted was totally wrong. His request for permission to read the twelve tasbīhs after the tahajjud salāh after seeing others doing it is exactly like a sick patient asking his doctor to prescribe *khamīrah gā'ū zabān* after seeing others taking it – irrespective of whether this medication is suitable for his illness or not.

Furthermore, by comparing the tasbīh to *khamīrah gā'ū zabān*, Hadrat Wālā is making reference to the fact that seeking permission from one's shaykh for certain forms of dhikr is exactly like a sick person who needs a laxative to remove all the filth from his body but is asking the doctor to give him a concoction which is actually a fortifying and strengthening medication for the heart. It is normally given after the removal of an illness in order to build up the patient and strengthen his health. If a soft-hearted doctor were to accede to his request merely to make him happy, it will not benefit the patient's illness in the least. In fact, it is not far fetched to assume that consuming *khamīrah gā'ū zabān* before its time may increase the patient's illness.

Rectification of deeds before dhikr and spiritual practices

Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "In most cases, it proves harmful and detrimental to occupy a seeker in spiritual practices before creating in him the importance of rectification of deeds. If he is made to do the former first, he starts to consider himself to be a very pious person. This is especially so if – incidentally – through his concentration in spiritual practices, he experiences certain spiritual conditions. In such a case he will consider himself to be included in the register of pious personalities. Whereas spiritual conditions of this nature have nothing to do

with piety. Spiritual conditions of this type are even experienced by sinners, immoral persons and unbelievers through striving and toiling. Once the seeker considers these conditions to be signs of piety, he does not see any need for rectification of his self and his deeds nor does he pay any attention to it. He remains in eternal ignorance and is deprived of the actual objective of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* – which can only be acquired through rectification of deeds according to the texts."

In short, through this one short reply of Hadrat Wālā, he opened the entire door of rectification for the above-mentioned seeker. By comparing the tasbīhs to *khamīrah gā'ū zabān*, he specified the position and rank of different forms of dhikr and spiritual practices which are only desirable, while the rectification of deeds is compulsory and more important.

Essentials for the rectification of deeds

Based on the above example, I recall another example of Hadrat Wālā. He says: "Different forms of dhikr and spiritual practices alone are not enough for the rectification of deeds. Rectification requires courage, imposing one's will on one's self, consciousness of the different methods and their repetition. However, the different forms of dhikr certainly aid a person in the path of rectification. The influence of spiritual practices in the rectification of the self is only as much as the juice of anise seed which is added to a laxative. Removal of waste matter from the body is essentially through a laxative, but drinking the juice of anise seed certainly helps the process. If a foolish person does not take the laxative and only drinks the juice of anise seed, the waste matter will never be removed. Yes, if he takes a laxative first and then drinks the juice as an aid, all the waste matter from the depths of the body will be removed very quickly. The juice of anise seed without the laxative is definitely not enough. Yes, the laxative alone without the anise seed juice can suffice, although the purpose will not be achieved with as much ease."

Commencement of dhikr and spiritual practices

The essence of the above is that in the beginning Hadrat Wālā's full focus is on instilling the importance of rectification of deeds in the mind of the seeker. As long as this objective is not realized, Hadrat Wālā does not rest nor does he allow the

seeker to rest. This is also his purpose in constant and excessive inquiries and questions. As long as the seeker does not develop considerable importance to rectification of deeds, Hadrat Wālā does not instruct him to engage in dhikr. Yes, once these two early stages are crossed – i.e. once the importance of rectification of deeds settles in the mind and the seeker pays particular attention to rectification of his deeds – Hadrat Wālā has no hesitation in teaching him different forms of dhikr. He does not wait for the completion of the phase of rectification of deeds before commencing occupation with dhikr.

The programme of the Chishtī masters

Hadrat Wālā says with reference to this system of his: "It was the practice of the Chishtī spiritual masters of the past to first complete the rectification of internal and external deeds and then to initiate the seeker in dhikr and spiritual practices. However, when the latter day elders saw that the lives and courage of people are short, they did not continue this system. Instead, together with rectification of deeds, they taught different forms of dhikr and ran both programmes parallel. Bearing in mind the wellbeing of the seekers of my time, I adopted a middle way between the system of the past and latter spiritual masters. That is, I keep the seeker occupied solely in the rectification of deeds. Once I see that its importance has settled fully in his mind and he is paying special attention to it, I teach him some dhikr and then run both programmes parallel. In short, after looking at the temperaments of the seekers of our time, I made a slight change in the programme of latter spiritual masters in the sense that they used to run both programmes concurrently from the beginning, while I do it after some time."

A reply to a seeker's letter

I quote a reply of Hadrat Wālā's letter on the subject of creating special importance to rectification of deeds in the mind of the seekers. Hadrat Wālā wrote this reply just today, 11 Ramadān al-Mubārak 1354 A.H.

In his previous letter to the seeker, Hadrat Wālā drew his attention to his past shortcomings and directed him towards making up for them. The seeker did not make any mention at all in his next letter, and merely requested for Hadrat Wālā's

prayers and enquired about his health just to please Hadrat Wālā. He also mentioned that eleven and quarter pārās of the Qur'ān were completed by him that night in the tarāwīh salāh.

Hadrat Wālā wrote: "You informed me about your tarāwīh salāh but made no mention of the discomforts and hardships which you imposed on others. Their rights which you trampled can only be atoned by providing them with comfort. Your not mentioning this is similar to a sick person informing his doctor of what types of food he eats, but not of his illness and the medication which he is taking. Will the doctor be happy with him? Only a doctor who wishes to fill his register with names of patients and has no affection for them will do such a thing."

Once again we see Hadrat Wālā using the example of a doctor and a patient.

An answer is explained through a question

Just recently another letter was received from a seeker. It is appropriate to this discussion. The seeker too wrote in his previous letter: "Hadrat, my heart desires to say 'Allāh Allāh' all the time. If Hadrat permits, I will commence with the programme which is laid out for a busy scholar as described in Hadrat's book, *Qasd as-Sabīl*."

Hadrat Wālā replied by asking: "Is this the only objective?"

Here too we see Hadrat Wālā first asking if this is the only objective. In the very first instance, he did not specify the actual objective so that the addressee may use his powers of thinking and realize the actual objective by himself. The reason for this is that when a point is learnt after instructing a person to study it, it settles firmly in the mind and is not forgotten. The above mentioned seeker understood everything from this one question of Hadrat Wālā. This is gauged from the seeker's subsequent reply. He writes: "I realize from the word "only" that although repetition of "Allāh Allāh" is an objective, it is not the only and first objective. It is desired after having purified one's self, as stated by Hadrat Wālā in his lectures. The fundamental objective is rectification. Hadrat Wālā provided excellent treatments for every ailment in our previous correspondences. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* the self is being overpowered and a weakness and waning has commenced in the essence of every evil trait. Through Hadrat Wālā's prayers, repeated awareness will firmly embed rectification and the condition of

the heart is changing. Sometimes I find myself hard-hearted and far from Allāh *taʿālā*, while at other times I experience extreme softness which causes me to cry, extend my hands and seek Allāh's pardon. My heart then gushes forth with love for Allāh *taʿālā*. I experience joy in Allāh's name and my heart desires to repeat "Allāh Allāh" but I abstain from it because I have not received permission to continue with it. It was because of the demands of this zeal and joy that I had requested Hadrat Wālā to permit me to repeat "Allāh Allāh". This is my present situation. Hadrat Wālā can now instruct me to do what is most appropriate. Was salām."

A seeker is kept occupied in rectification of the self for a long time

I [the compiler] say: From the subject matter of the above letter the reader must have gauged how beneficial Hadrat Wālā's teaching methodology is. I personally know that the above-mentioned seeker was suffering from severe spiritual ailments and also committing major sins. However, he continually informed Hadrat Wālā of his conditions and got himself rectified and treated. There were times when – even during the course of rectification – he was overpowered by the demands of his self and would commit major sins again. He would revert to Hadrat Wālā and clearly relate his embarrassing actions for the sake of rectification and ask him a way for atonement. On one occasion, Hadrat Wālā wrote as a way of reprimand: "If you cannot exercise your will and courage to abstain from sins which are within your choice, you must never write to me in future. If you write, I will send the letter back without replying to it."

However, since he was a genuine seeker, Hadrat Wālā wrote this reply and also read it to those who were present without disclosing the seeker's identity. Hadrat Wālā added: "I wrote this merely as a reprimand so that he desists from this action in the future. Once I see him back on the path after a few days, I will permit him to correspond with me again." The seeker persisted in his quest until Hadrat Wālā eventually granted him permission. Now look at the results of Hadrat Wālā's method of teaching and instruction. By Allāh's grace, the seeker developed total affinity with the path and was rectified to a great extent as is evident from the above-quoted letter. He is corresponding with Hadrat Wālā for a long time but Hadrat Wālā has confined him solely to rectification of the self without

teaching him any forms of dhikr. Despite this, look at the benefit which he derived and the level of capability which he developed in reaching his objective [Allāh *taʿālā*]. As Hadrat Wālā says: "A stick lies in the sun for some time until it becomes so dry that a single spark can ignite it."

In the same way, the above seeker has developed such capabilities that – Allāh willing - just a few days of dhikr will enable him to realize his objective. In fact, he has achieved a lot already because – by the help of Allāh *taʿālā* – he has control over his self and developed enthusiasm in dhikr and spiritual practices. What else can he desire? This, despite the fact that this person has not even had the opportunity of presenting himself in the Khānqāh as yet. It is through such experiences that Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "When those who adhere to instructional correspondence come here, then by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* they become so capable that in their very first meeting I accept their bayʿah and also permit them to induct murīds [i.e. I appoint them as my khulafā']."

A very valuable analysis on the basis on which khilāfah is conferred has been written by Hadrat Wālā. Allāh willing, it will be quoted in a future chapter. Subsequent to the above seeker's letter, it would seem that his request for dhikr would have been accepted and he would have been given permission to engage in it. However, Hadrat Wālā does not leave a seeker until he has rectified every minute point in him. He therefore wrote the following: "Why did you not write all the details previously? Do you think I have knowledge of the unseen? You may write whatever you like after answering this question."

After writing this reply, Hadrat Wālā said to those who were present: "One must not be satisfied so quickly. He also has to be taught the etiquette of writing letters. When he wrote the first time, he said: 'My heart desires to say Allāh Allāh all the time.' As for the conditions which he wrote now with reference to rectification of the self, he made no mention of them in the first letter. This is why I had to ask him: 'Is this the only objective?' Had he related all his conditions in the first letter, there would have been no reason for me to pose this question. I aim to rectify a seeker completely. This is why I repeatedly ask questions. On the other hand, those with twisted minds say to me: 'You seem to be a well-wisher of the postal service, this is why you make people buy so many stamps and instruct them

to write letters again and again.’ Now what reply can I give to such twisted-minded people apart from saying: ‘Very well, brother, you can continue thinking like that and stop writing to me. You should rather revert to a person who is not a well-wisher of the postal service. Nowadays, there are many who are not well-wishers of the postal service.’”

Rectification of actions is the essence

Another seeker wrote: “I carry out such and such spiritual practices. Kindly apprise me of the shortcomings which are found in them.” Hadrat Wālā replied: “This is based on a person’s time and how much he can bear. The essential thing in which failings and progress can be observed is rectification of actions.”

Sequence in rectification of actions

Another seeker wrote: “Hadrat Wālā has certainly treated my illness of casting evil gazes. I cannot say that I have been completely cured but – Allāh willing – it will not be wrong for me to say that through Allāh’s grace and Hadrat Wālā’s blessings, I could not have expected to experience even one tenth of the cure which I did experience due to my severe engrossment in this sin. From among the sins of the body parts, I now find myself backbiting quite a bit. Although this too has decreased compared to before in the sense that previously I did not even perceive it while now I feel remorse after it, I hope that Hadrat Wālā will now provide me with a treatment for backbiting.”

Hadrat Wālā asked: “Has the treatment for your previous ailment [casting evil gazes] been completed and taken root?”

The seeker wrote back: “It seems that the urge to look is not non-existent, but there are few and rare occasions when I do commit this sin.”

Hadrat Wālā wrote: “What is the meaning of ‘few and rare occasions’? if a person says: ‘I have given up drinking alcohol, I only drink it now and then’, will this be considered to be giving it up?”

I [the compiler] am concluding this point. Many examples which are applicable to it are coming to mind but I have already written quite a bit in this regard. Since many of Hadrat Wālā’s principles of teaching and training have come to the fore

under this discussion, the reader is requested to read it carefully and gather the various principles in his mind.

Allāh willing, I will take special care not to mention more than one principle under a single point and be brief in doing it because I would like to conclude this chapter quickly and commence the other chapters. Furthermore, my leave is coming to an end and I hope to write as much of the biography as I can. If not – Allāh forbid – there is a fear of it remaining incomplete. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to help me and to enable me to complete the remaining chapters quickly. Āmīn.

A seeker is reprimanded for the slightest shortcoming

Hadrat Wālā's focus is on completing the different levels of rectification. This is why he cannot tolerate even the slightest and smallest shortcoming or inattention. He reprimands the person immediately and clearly. He wrote to a seeker: "Your letter contains the following statement: 'I posed a question once before and was deprived of an answer.' Is this not an objection against me? Is this objection not baseless? Is a person not offended by a baseless objection? Can one expect any service when he has offended the other party? Yet you are writing that you are a murīd and have faith in me!? This entails the joining of two opposites. How sad!"

In some cases, Hadrat Wālā goes to the extent of writing: "Do not send any letters to me for as long as you have not learnt some manners."

In other cases, Hadrat Wālā completely gives up teaching and instructing the seeker. He complains quite often: "Nowadays there is no etiquette in the temperaments of people – except for a few. This is why they remain deprived. Nothing can be achieved without respect for one's shaykh. Respect is not confined to honouring and revering the shaykh – this is merely an outward form of respect. The essence of respect is to save one's self from causing harm and to be a source of comfort. If a person is offended by a lot of respect and reverence, then this is also disrespect."

Hadrat Wālā also says: "Some people do not cause offence wittingly. However, the absence of an intent to cause offence is not enough. It is essential to have an intent not to cause offence."

Avoiding futilities

Hadrat Wālā pays special importance to removing the seekers from futile activities and occupying them in essentials. There are countless examples on this point but bearing in mind that I had promised to be brief, I will present just one incident to serve as an example. A seeker who was a scholar wrote: "The thought has come to my defective mind that such and such person who makes such and such claims be included in such and such false group."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "I am quite saddened by the fact that a spiritual relationship is established with me in order to obtain my views on such policies. There are others who are more knowledgeable than me in this field."

Warning against questions which are out of the realm of the object of affinity

In most cases, Hadrat Wālā used to warn the seekers from posing juridical questions only. He would ask them: "Can't these questions be posed to other 'ulamā'? There are many others who are far more qualified than me in this field. I should only be asked about matters concerning your rectification, after all, this is the reason you established a bond with me."

Hadrat Wālā explains the wisdom behind this: By confining themselves to asking juridical questions, the seekers assume that they have fulfilled the rights of bay'ah and their bond with me. They do not pay attention to their rectification. A certain person always asks me to research juridical issues. I continued answering his questions for quite some time, but when I saw that he was restricting himself to this and not asking anything at all about his own rectification – apart from complaining about a lack of spiritual experiences – then in order to save him from this spiritual harm, I frankly said to him: 'Do not ask me to research these juridical issues. Ask me about matters for which you established a link with me, i.e. rectification of the inner self. However, bearing in mind that it is also essential to inquire about juridical matters, you must revert to Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib for this purpose." The Maulānā was alive at the time, and the seeker did as he was told. Now when he writes to me, he writes nothing apart from matters related to his own rectification. In short, he was forced to turn his attention to his own rectification. This benefited him tremendously until he reached the point where – by the grace

of Allāh *taʿālā* – he became one who was attuned to Allāh *taʿālā* and was appointed as a khalīfah."

Hadrat Wālā also says in this regard: "By the will of Allāh, the task of issuing fatwās and answering questions is being carried out in many places. And there are many people who are far more knowledgeable than me in this field. However, the task of spiritual rectification is not being done anywhere with special attention and focus. I saw the need for it and assumed the responsibility of rendering this service although I am, to a certain extent, not on such a level."

A short and comprehensive course of action for the seekers

Every instruction of Hadrat Wālā on the subject of spiritual training is worthy of being written in gold. However, there are some special instructions which are so comprehensive, all-embracing and simple that although they are a collection of just a few simple words, they encompass the entire science of Sufism and contain a complete course of action for the seekers. Although some of these comprehensive statements make up just a few lines, Hadrat Wālā considered them to be separate and complete articles for which he gave them independent titles. For example, *Rūh at-Tarīq, Wudūh at-Tarīq, Futūh at-Tarīq, Tashīl at-Tarīq* and so on. Some of these have already been quoted. A few short-sighted and foolish people made this objection: "Do you ever see articles made up of just a few lines?!" A certain person gave a beautiful reply to this objection. He said: "This is actually an emulation of the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* because He also specified just a few lines, and in some instances, just a single line as a sūrah, e.g. Sūrah al-Kauthar, Sūrah al-ʿAsr and Sūrah al-Ikhlās."

The core of most of these comprehensive teachings is: "Man is only answerable for matters which are within his choice. He is not answerable for what is beyond his will. Therefore, he must go to pains in having courage and using his will in matters which are within his choice. As for those which are not within his choice, he must neither chase after them nor worry about them."

Principles for success in Dīn and in this world

If a person adheres firmly to just this one principle, he will acquire success and rectitude in both Dīn and in this world. He will never experience worry. Hadrat Wālā has clarified the issue

of matters which are within one's choice and those which are not in a manner which was unprecedented for many centuries. He derived so much of benefit from it that thousands of difficulties along the path were solved through it. When a seeker desires rectification of a defect in him, the first question which Hadrat Wālā poses to him is this: "Is it within your choice or not?" If the seeker says that it is within his choice, he says: "If the doing of something is within one's choice, giving it up is also within one's choice. Take the courage to exercise your will and give up that sin." If the seeker says: "It is beyond my choice" and it is really beyond a person's choice, Hadrat Wālā says: "A person is not even answerable for what is beyond him. So there is not even any Dīnī harm in it. Why, then, should a treatment be sought?"

Some people said: "We have understood that there is no Dīnī harm in it because it is beyond one's choice, but discomfort and worry are certainly experienced. And these also need to be treated." Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is not my responsibility to treat discomfort and worry. If not, someone will tell me tomorrow: 'Hadrat, my stomach is paining and this is causing me a lot of worry and discomfort. Show me a treatment for it.'"

A person asked for a treatment for futile conversations. As was his practice, Hadrat Wālā asked: "Is it within your choice or not?" The person wrote back: "It is within my choice, but please provide an easy plan." Hadrat Wālā replied: "For how many things are you going to ask for ease? What, then, would the meaning of this Hadīth be:

حفت الجنة بالمكاره

Paradise is surrounded by difficulties.

Allāh *taʿālā* has placed so much of blessings in Hadrat Wālā's teachings that most of the seekers – when it is emphasised on them to do what is within their will - are inspired to follow what is within their will and many serious faults and sins are given up.

Easy ways to practise on principles

On seeing some people making full efforts to make use of their willpower and asking for ways to combat the demands of the self, Hadrat Wālā said: "Although it is not the responsibility of a shaykh to show an easy procedure, I am showing it as a gift.

By continually trying to combat the self, this need becomes gradually weaker and combating it becomes easier. In short, the procedure which is acquired is also the easy one. However, this principle applies in most cases, not in all. Some people have to strive throughout their lives. A seeker has to be prepared to strive for the rest of his life. After all, we have been sent to this world to strive. Those who experience ease after striving continue receiving rewards for striving because the ease was realized because of the striving."

A person wrote: "I have the destructive and chronic illness of increasing my contact and relations with people. I would really like to give up this habit but I am failing although this is a matter which is within my control."

The only formal answer to this was to tell him to be courageous. However, since he wrote only after embarking on his own efforts, Hadrat Wālā wrote to him saying: "The original treatment is to take courage. However, in order to aid you in this process, you must impose a fine on your self. That is, if you act against your word, you will offer so many rakʿats of salāh or give so much in charity."

My own story

I myself had written to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion and said to him: "I am an introvert by nature. I am terrified by mixing and intermingling with people. When I do meet them, I certainly transgress the limits. I imposed on myself several times but I am unable to realize this even after meeting people only when necessary. I am once again intending to go into seclusion. Once I do this, excessive speaking will automatically come to an end. I earnestly desire to spend all my time in essentials, necessities, dhikr and contemplation. Hadrat Wālā's instruction: "I want no one to speak to anyone here" was totally in accordance with my temperament and nature…

Hadrat Wālā replied: "You have exceeded the bounds in this regard as well. Moderation in every matter is praiseworthy. But certain temperaments cannot achieve it without adopting a certain plan for it. The procedure is that without any intense need, you must not initiate a conversation with anyone nor go to anyone. If a person initiates a conversation with you, reply with what is essential and in a concise manner. And then occupy yourself in dhikr. Allāh willing, you will develop

moderation. I am also praying for you. Inform me after one week."

Look at the valuable simple procedure which Hadrat Wālā asked me to follow. However, a simple procedure is only shown to the one who asks after having tried to exercise his will. There are some to whom he shows an easy way in the very beginning or without the person even asking for it. Hadrat Wālā does this when he gauges through circumstantial evidence that the person is showing special importance to his rectification. The pure Sharīʿah also provides ease in some injunctions and not in others. In other words, strict adherence to ease is not established. We learn from this collection that a shaykh has the choice to show an easy way where he deems fit, and not to show it where it is inappropriate. Hadrat Wālā has gone into a very detailed and scholarly discussion on this subject in his lecture titled *at-Tah-sīl wa at-Tas-hīl maʿa at-Takmīl wa at-Taʿdīl*. It has been published and is worth studying.

In short, Hadrat Wālā resorts a lot to the issue of having a choice or no choice in the course of his programme of rectification. This is because it contains many small points which can be applied and countless objections which can be solved through it. He constantly says: "This issue of having a choice or no choice is half of Sufism, in fact, it is almost its sum total."

At this point, I would like to quote another instruction of Hadrat Wālā which he had written in reply to a seeker's letter. It was quoted previously but is repeated bearing in mind its applicability over here. The same issue of having a choice or no choice is resorted to and a very beneficial aspect of Sufism and a complete course of action is prescribed. The path is made absolutely easy. Hadrat Wālā also titled it *Tas-hīl at-Tarīq* (Simplification of the Path)

A seeker wrote: "I find my condition ruined. There is nothing but perplexity."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "The desire to put yourself into difficulty is certainly not its treatment. The path is absolutely clear – do not worry about what is not within your control. Taking courage is within your control. If you err, make up for the past through seeking forgiveness, and renew your courage for the

future. In addition to courage, adhere to prayer and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā*."

Awareness of sins is not the essential objective

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent course of action! The seekers ought to make it an amulet for themselves and a practice for the rest of their lives.

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to the past: After repenting properly once, do not remain in the grief of sins. Instead, occupy yourself in the tasks ahead. If not, thinking of one's sins and grieving over them will become a natural barrier between yourself and the True Beloved. A servant has been created for the eternal visualization of his True Beloved, not to meditate over his sins. Awareness of sins was necessary for repentance. Now that repentance has been made, what is the need to be conscious of them? Awareness of sins is certainly not the essential objective, it is an attached objective. To be wittingly conscious of one's sins even after repentance means that the attached objective has been made an essential objective. When a mistake is committed, then instead of sitting down and grieving over it, engage in a thorough repentance and seeking of forgiveness, end the matter there, and continue with the tasks ahead. Attaching yourself to the tasks ahead will automatically make up for that mistake.

Even in the case of abundant seeking of forgiveness – for which there are many virtues – a general consciousness is sufficient, viz. "I have sinned and I seek forgiveness for all my sins." Apart from this, Allāh *taʿālā* certainly has knowledge of all your sins, there is no need to have detailed awareness of them all. In fact, the natural consequence of doing this will create a barrier because constant awareness of one's sins results in despondence. A person will think: "I have committed such and such sins, and there are so many of them, how will I ever be pardoned? How will Allāh *taʿālā* be pleased with me?" When a person constantly think about another's displeasure, its natural effect is that he becomes withdrawn from that person. In short, a detailed awareness of one's sins causes a natural obstacle. However, if a person thinks of his sins unwittingly, he must make a specific repentance for the sins which he thought of. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself made a prayer which contains an awareness:

مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ اَعْلَمْ

Those which I am aware of and those which I do not know.

This proves that a detailed awareness of one's sins are not necessary for seeking forgiveness. If not, instead of teaching us to say "those which I do not know", he would have instructed us to think of each sin, recall each one and repent for them.

Another H̲adīth can be presented as a basis for this issue. It has been explained by H̲ad̲rat Wālā in *at-Tasharruf*. Since this explanation clarifies and explains this point quite well, I consider it appropriate to quote it here.

إذا تاب العبد أنسى الله الحفظة ذنوبه وأنسى ذلك جوارحه ومعالمه من الأرض حتى يلقى الله وليس عليه شاهد من الله بذنب. ابن عساكر عن أنس رضي الله عنه.

مدلول الحديث ظاهر ويمكن أن يؤخذ منه بالقياس ما نقل عن بعض العارفين أن من علائم قبول التوبة نسيان العبد الذنب فإن القلب الذي به يتذكر الذنب كالجوارح كما فسروا به قوله تعالى إن السمع والبصر والفؤاد كل أولئك كان عنه مسئولا، أي كل واحد من هذه الأعضاء كان عنه أي عما نسب إليه مسئولا ليشهد على صاحبه (بتصير الرحمن) هذا هو السر في الآخرة. وأما السر في الدنيا فهو أن تذكر الذنب قد يكون حجابا طبعيا من التوجه إلى الله بالانشراح فينسيه الله تعالى إياه، وعندي أن هذا ليس بلازم ولا دائم فإن بعضهم عن التوجه فهذه العلامة لبعض أفراد القبول لا لجميعها.

When a person repents (sincerely, and it is accepted) Allāh taʿālā *causes the record-keeping angels to forget his sins. He also causes the person's body parts and sections of the earth (i.e. the places where he committed the sins, and which normally give testimony against a sinner on the day of Resurrection) to forget his sins. The person eventually meets Allāh* taʿālā *without a single witness to testify against him.*

The meaning of this H̲adīth is clear. Through analogy, it is possible to accept what has been reported from some spiritual masters, viz. from among the signs of acceptance of a person's repentance is his forgetting that sin. The heart through which sins are remembered is like the body parts as explained by the commentators in the commentary to the verse: "Surely the ears,

eyes and the heart – all of them – will be questioned thereof."[1] *They will be questioned so that they may testify against the person to whom those body parts belonged (the heart is included among the testifiers, so the heart will also be made to forget the sin). This is the wisdom applicable to the Hereafter. As for the wisdom behind causing them to forget in this world, it is that recalling one's sins could result in a natural obstacle for some seekers from directing their selves openly and whole-heartedly towards Allāh* taʿālā *(divine wisdom sometimes removes the natural barrier for the wellbeing of some seekers). According to me, this forgetting is neither essential nor eternal because the intellect of some seekers overwhelms their natural tendencies. For such a person to recall his sins does not prevent him from turning to Allāh* taʿālā*. This sign has been accepted by some individuals, not by all.*

(It is therefore possible for the presence of forgetfulness and non-acceptance of repentance. In fact, the forgetfulness could well be due to negligence. It is also possible for acceptance of repentance and an absence of forgetfulness. In fact, a person should remember with this benefit in mind that continuous seeking of forgiveness would enable him to progress in his acceptance in the eyes of Allāh taʿālā*).*

Reconciliation between the opinion of Shaykh Akbar and the majority

An answer to a question which is related to this subject is mentioned in *Imdād al-Fatāwā*. It is quoted here.

> Question: H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Akbar states in *Futūh̲āt* that a sign of acceptance of repentance is that the effect of that sin is completely obliterated from the mind and the person does not recall it for the rest of his life. This subject is named *Qās̲imah az̲-Z̲ahr*. Imām Shaʿrānī *rah̲imahullāh* makes mention of this issue in his writings in a manner which portrays that he also accepts this. Whereas, in the vast majority of books written by the spiritual masters it is stated that it is essential for a seeker to be conscious of his sins at all times. He must never forget them. Especially Imām Shaʿrānī *rah̲imahullāh* places a lot of stress on this issue. There seems to be

[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 36.

a contradiction between the two. What is the reality and how could the two be reconciled?

Answer: Obliteration does not mean that the person does not recall the sin at all. Rather, the special effect of the repentance – i.e. natural despondence – does not remain even though he may remember it. If doctrinal despondence also exists, this does not contradict the instruction to remember one's sin. And this too does not apply to everyone. Rather, it applies to certain temperaments for whom natural despondence becomes an obstacle from whole-heartedness in obedience. The original texts are not before me at present. I answered in the light of what was quoted in the question. It is possible for a better way of reconciliation between the two views.

Five points for rectification of actions

All the above was mentioned by the way while explaining details about the issue of actions which are within one's choice and those which are not. I now return to this issue. Hadrat Wālā explains the same issue [of actions which are within one's choice and those which are not] through various other titles, e.g. rational and natural, deeds and conditions, active and passive actions, objectives and non-objectives. We now have five titles, but all have the same meaning, i.e. the statement of Hadrat Wālā which was presented to the reader at the beginning – man is answerable for actions which are within his choice, not for those which are beyond him. Hadrat Wālā resorts to these five titles profusely in the course of his programme of rectification and solves many major difficulties of the seekers through them. So much so that the lives of many seekers were saved and the īmān of many remained intact through them. Even now, many are living by taking support from these titles. Had these points of Hadrat Wālā not been before them, they would have either become despondent of their īmān, destroyed themselves or – Allāh forbid – renounced īmān.

Some of Hadrat Wālā's statements on these five titles are now presented concisely to serve as examples. He says with regard to actions which are within one's choice and those which are not:

It is within one's choice to bring whisperings in one's mind. A person must abstain from doing this. As for the inundation of whisperings, this is not within a person's choice. He must not bother about them. However, to maintain whisperings which have come on their own and to keep them in the mind is blameworthy because it is within one's choice to do this. In the same way, it is within one's power to attach the heart when engaged in dhikr, reciting the Qur'ān and performing salāh. But the heart to attach itself, this is not within one's choice. A person must gather the causes and means which would enable attachment of the heart. If after this, the heart still does not become attached, he must continue with his actions and impose on himself to carry them out. In the same way, he must not grieve over his inclination towards sins because such an inclination is not within his will. However, to abstain from acting according to the dictates and demands of that inclination is within his control. A person is not taken to task for mere inclination, he is taken to task for acting on it.

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to the rational and natural:

Man is accountable for rational matters because they are within his choice. He is not accountable for natural matters because they are not within his choice.

A seeker wrote: "Previously when I used to miss the fajr salāh, I used to cry profusely. But now I do not feel any grief. I feel my heart has become black." Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "Natural grief is not the objective, rational grief is. And you have this quality. Sorrow over the absence of grief is a sign that you have rational grief."

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to deeds and conditions:

Deeds are the objectives, not conditions. This is because deeds are within one's control, conditions are not.

There was a person who used to correspond with Hadrat Wālā on matters related to the spiritual path. He wanted to acquire yearning. Hadrat Wālā finally wrote to him in conclusion: "Active deeds are considered, not passive. One should give importance to deeds because they are within one's control. He must not hanker after passive actions because they are beyond one's control."

He says with regard to objective and non-objectives:

The stations are the objectives, i.e. deeds which are within one's control, and not conditions which are beyond one's control.

He also says: "Although praiseworthy conditions are worthy of praise, they are not the objectives because they are not within one's control. Neither is their acquisition essential nor is their existence eternal. If a person acquires them, he must be grateful. If he does not acquire them or they disappear after having acquired them, he must not grieve."

I recall expressing my sorrow in one of my letters to Hadrat Wālā by saying: "During my last visit, I had come with a special spiritual condition which I had never experienced before. However, after I returned home, it gradually waned until it became non-existent."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Experiencing a certain spiritual condition and it remaining for some time is a boon in itself. The thing which remains forever is only one's intellect and īmān. Everything else comes and goes."

Half of Sufism

As we can see, Allāh *taʿālā* exposed the issue of actions which are within one's choice and those which are not in such a manner to Hadrat Wālā that he can easily put it to use under various titles depending on the understanding and capabilities of the seekers. This issue proves to be most beneficial on every occasion. There is no exaggeration in Hadrat Wālā's statement when he says: "This issue of having a choice or no choice is half of Sufism, in fact, it is almost its sum total."

No matter to what extent we ponder over it, there is probably no aspect of spiritual training and rectification which is not directly or indirectly connected to this issue. There is probably no stage of the path wherein it does not serve as a guiding lamp.

Steering the seekers away from results and spiritual conditions

Hadrat Wālā emphatically keeps the seekers away from results and spiritual conditions. He constantly says: "The soul of results is close proximity. This is what a person should focus on. He must not await any other results." In fact, all superfluous matters related to the path are treated in such a manner by Hadrat Wālā that a seeker is compelled to shift

away from them and to occupy himself in the essentials and objectives of the path. For example, if a person relates a dream to him for interpretation, then instead of interpreting it, he would say: "I have no affinity whatsoever with interpretation of dreams. You should rather ask me about matters which occur during wakefulness." A poet says:

> I am neither the night nor the worshipper of the night, which would qualify me to interpret dreams. I am the slave of the sun. This is why I talk about matters related to the sun.

"What benefit is there in dreams? Consideration is given to what happens when a person is in a state of wakefulness – a state which is within his control. If a person does not rectify his state of wakefulness, and dreams that he is traversing the Grand Throne and Chair [of Allāh *taʿālā*], he does not acquire the slightest bit of proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. On the other hand, if a person's state of wakefulness is rectified to the required level, then even if he sees himself in the Hell-fire in his dream, he is considered to be close to Allāh *taʿālā*. I do not intend refuting dreams altogether. However, the masses have raised the level of dreams beyond that of glad-tidings, and this is what I intend lowering."

If someone complained to him: "Previously I used to cry a lot but now I cannot seem to cry", Hadrat Wālā would reply: "Crying of the eyes is not the objective, crying of the heart is, and you have acquired this because you are sorrowful over the fact that you are unable to cry anymore."

Hadrat Wālā said on one occasion:

"Even if a person wants to see results and experience spiritual conditions, it is necessary to remain aloof from them because spiritual conditions are experienced through full focus. If a person focuses on the descent of spiritual conditions, where will he ever be focussed? This is why an intelligent and sharp person does not experience spiritual conditions. Even if he does, they are rare because his mind is always working and he is not focussed on one thing. And spiritual conditions cannot be experienced without total focus. This is why an intelligent person rarely experiences spiritual conditions. On the other hand, the person whose intelligence is diminished has a lot of affinity with such influences. Although the opposite is not

necessarily true, such people are extremely good for themselves but of little benefit to others."

To sum up, Hadrat Wālā emphatically prohibits the seekers from turning their attention towards spiritual conditions. If anyone relates his spiritual conditions to him, he would reply: "Do not bother about them and remain focussed on the work at hand. A seeker must remain focussed on what he has to do or else he will occupy himself in non-objectives and forget about his actual work. Furthermore, spiritual conditions also cease because their descent is by virtue of remain engrossed in the work at hand. Like a lamp whose light will remain for as long as the oil reaches the wick. If adding oil is stopped totally, the light will decrease gradually and eventually become extinguished."

The status of expositions and spiritual conditions

Hadrat Wālā said with regard to the same subject:

"Expositions, spiritual conditions, spiritual emotions and so on are of no relevance in the path of Sufism. In fact, in most cases they become obstacles in the path. Their absence is better and devoid of danger. People desire them unnecessarily. This subject can be understood through the following example:

A person is travelling on a passenger train which stops at every station before reaching Delhi. This train's windows are also open. The man enjoys the journey by looking at the scenery which he is passing. He stops at Taundla, Itāwah and other stations, gets off, climbs on again and eventually reaches Delhi. Another person boards an express train from Kānpūr. The train's windows are closed. The train speeds on towards Delhi and reaches there in a short time. The man who was on this train knew nothing of the scenery outside nor of the stations which the train passed through. If the other person informs him of the scenery and stations which he missed, and he therefore thinks that he has not even reached Delhi [bearing in mind that he did not see all these things], then it actually shows his ingratitude and ignorance because he had boarded a special express train which was travelling at a high speed and reached Delhi within a few hours. On the other hand, the other person reached much later because he came by a passenger train which was travelling at a slow speed and also stopping at every station. In fact, there is an additional danger for the

person travelling by passenger train. He may well be attracted to one of the places where the train stopped, get off there, and never reach Delhi for the rest of his life.

In the same way, some seekers consider spiritual experiences to be the objective and remain engrossed in them without proceeding forward. The path of Sufism which is treaded without expositions, spiritual experiences and so on is therefore much safer. Expositions and the like are – in some cases – extremely dangerous. Our Hadrat Hājī Sāhib used to say: "An effulgent obstacle is more serious than a dark obstacle. A seeker is not deluded by a dark obstacle because he knows it for what it is. On the other hand, he is deluded and deceived by an effulgent obstacle and considers it to be his objective."

I [the compiler] say: Despite these restrictions, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the seekers who are affiliated to Hadrat Wālā experience every type of praiseworthy spiritual condition. Crying and beseeching, zeal and fervour, enthusiasm and yearning, spiritual ecstasy and delight, fear and affinity, retraction and expansion – all these types of conditions are continually experienced by his associates. There was a time when a certain seeker used to be overcome by such a strong spiritual condition at the time of tahajjud that all those who were present used to become distressed. Eventually, Hadrat Wālā himself spent the night in the Khānqāh. When it was the time to engage in dhikr, he seated this particular seeker next to him. When the seeker started to experience an ecstasy, he got up from there. Hadrat Wālā followed him, caught him, gave him a hard slap – as a form of treatment – and scolded him harshly saying: "What do you think, you are gone too big? Do you think that all zeal and fervour has been reserved for you alone? Just you watch, I will remove all your zeal and fervour today!"

One of the ways of treating such a person is not to accord him any value. So when Hadrat Wālā treated him in this way, all his zeal and fervour disappeared and he never experienced such a condition again. Subsequently, he met Hadrat Wālā after a long time in Calcutta and said to him: "I was never overcome by a spiritual condition since that day."

Consideration to praiseworthy conditions

Hadrat Wālā did not treat every condition as above. Instead, he very often says with regard to praiseworthy conditions: "A spiritual experience should be treated like a temperamental but honourable guest. He must be treated with a lot of courtesy or else the slightest inattention will cause him to leave."

There is a seeker who is overcome by his conditions and is reduced to tears and crying when he hears Hadrat Wālā's recitation of the Qur'ān and his statements. One day in the fajr salāh he was trying to withhold his urge to cry. Hadrat Wālā perceived this and when he completed the salāh, he turned around and said: "There is no need to swallow and subdue one's urge. If you feel like crying, you may do so to your heart's desire and lighten your burden. You may fall ill if you subdue and suppress it too much."

Spiritual conditions must be controlled

I [the compiler] had to hand-deliver Hadrat Wālā's written reply to one of the seeker's who was residing in the Khānqāh. When Hadrat Wālā despatched me with it, he emphasised: "Once you hand it over to him, you must leave there immediately because there must be no obstacle to the condition which he is going to experience after reading what I wrote. He must be given full freedom in such a condition or else the effect of what I wrote will not be completed if others are present. Even if it does take effect, he will suppress it out of bashfulness, and this will cause him harm." In short, Hadrat Wālā treats each person according to what is most suited for that person. However, he prefers all forms of ecstasy, zeal, fervour, crying and so on to take place in privacy, not in public.

Since this was also the preferred way of Hadrat Wālā, those who remained in his company gradually developed this temperament. The following couplets composed by myself apply to such seekers:

> I had come crying to you, but I am now leaving you
> with silence on my lips and joy in my heart.
>
> I had come to you while making a big noise and din.
> I am now leaving in silence with my head downcast.

Hadrat Wālā teaches us that the essential response to such conditions is to suppress them. But if a person is overwhelmed

and there is pain in suppressing them, then it would be more appropriate to give vent to them. In this way, the overwhelming experience will disappear. Once this happens and the condition comes within the limit of control, he must control and suppress it immediately.

When Hadrat Wālā said this, I said to him: "But Hadrat Wālā quotes this saying of the elders which states that a spiritual experience should be treated as an esteemed guest and his right should be fulfilled." Hadrat Wālā replied immediately: "A spiritual experience will only be referred to as a guest when the experience overpowers a person. In such a case, he must certainly fulfil its rights. However, before it overwhelms a person, it is neither a guest nor does it enjoy any rights. If its rights are fulfilled before it overwhelms a person, it is similar to seeing a traveller on the road and forcing him to become your guest, and saying to him: 'You are my guest, come, let me fulfil your rights.'"

Abstain from a distinguishing position

Conditions and experiences of this nature can be entertained, but they must remain inside, not come out into the open. I recall another statement of Hadrat Wālā: "A person must pay a lot of importance to piety and righteousness. However, as far as possible, he must not allow a distinguishing position for himself to develop whereby he becomes well-known. When he has the occasion of interacting with people, he must joke a little with them so that they do not start attributing piety to him. However, he must never engage in excessive laughing and joking because this is harmful. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said with regard to laughing excessively:

إياك وكثرة الضحك فإن كثرة الضحك تميت القلب

Beware of excessive laughter because it deadens the heart.

Types of beautiful speech: "Hadrat ʿAttār *rahimahullāh* says with reference to excessive speech:

> Excessive talking deadens the heart in the body even
> if your talks are as valuable as the pearls of Eden.

You can try this out yourself and you will see that excessive talking causes the heart to become lightless. If a boiling cauldron of food is about to over-boil and nothing is done to

stop it, all the spices will boil over and the food will remain tasteless. So even if good conversations are engaged in unnecessarily, they will have no effect."

Hadrat Wālā added: "It is generally understood that there are three categories of speech: (1) beneficial, (2) harmful, (3) futile – neither beneficial nor harmful. However, as regards outcome, I feel that there are only two categories, beneficial and harmful. This is because speech which is neither harmful nor beneficial eventually proves to be harmful. A person who occupies himself in futile activities will generally be found lacking in carrying out necessary activities. This is not confined to laughing and talking but all lawful activities. Excesses in them are harmful. However, if there is no excessiveness and there is moderation in lawful activities, then instead of being harmful, they are beneficial. This is especially so when the occupation is based on some wisdom because the occupation creates vigour which in turn helps a person in carrying out acts of obedience with ease.

When occupation in a lawful activity creates discomfort in the heart, a person must realize that the activity has now reached a level of harm. He must distance himself immediately from it. However, this criterion is only for that person who has developed such a perception through companionship of a shaykh and adhering strictly to dhikr and obedience. As for a novice, he must not prescribe anything for himself. He must inform his shaykh of every condition separately and ask him for a course of action for each one. He must then adhere to whatever he prescribes for whichever condition."

The harms of increasing spiritual conditions

Hadrat Wālā was very concerned about seekers not allowing conditions to increase beyond their own levels or else it would cause many harms. Hadrat Wālā sorrowfully relates the statement of a dervish who used to remain in solitude. The dervish considered one of Hadrat Wālā's attendants to be a pious person and asked him about his spiritual practices and whether he sees anything [of the unseen] when he carries them out. The attendant replied that he does not see anything. The dervish said: "So what is the benefit of those practices? Are you only going to receive rewards for them?!" After relating this statement, Hadrat Wālā says: "I was extremely saddened and

also astonished by his response because he considered rewards – which are the souls of all good deeds – to be so insignificant."

Hadrat Wālā added: "Solitude where a person does not even meet and interact with spiritual masters is harmful. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says with reference to solitude of this nature:

> The thoughts of an ignorant person who remains in solitude eventually terminate with his rejection of Dīn.

Hadrat Wālā continues: "These are the harms of giving more than necessary importance to spiritual conditions. Their status is only like sweets which are given to children to encourage them to study. This is the import of the following statement of Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* when he said:

تلك خيالات تربى بها أطفال الطريقة

Some novices who are actually children in the path are given conditions of yearning and enthusiasm in order to make them tread the path.

Hadrat Wālā writes to a very senior scholar and speaks to him about a condition which is superior to all spiritual conditions, viz. firmness. He writes: "Do not pay any attention to firmness. The purpose of firmness is to put into action. Action is not to be used as a means to obtain firmness. If action is realized without firmness, the objective has been acquired."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* clarified the realities of the path through Hadrat Wālā. Look at how He removed the followers of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from mistakes and placed them on the path of the Sunnah – a programme which had become almost non-existent in these times especially among the Sufis.

Difference between firmness and steadfastness

When questioned, Hadrat Wālā explained the difference between firmness and steadfastness as follows: "Firmness is a condition while steadfastness is a station. Firmness is a natural level of rectification which is not within one's choice. Steadfastness is a rational level which is within one's choice. Steadfastness is an objective while firmness is not, although it is praiseworthy."

The rational and natural level of īmān and actions

H̲ad̲rat Wālā explains the rational and natural level of īmān and actions as follows: "The rational level is superior because it is longer lasting and stems from spirituality. At the same time, this does not mean that the rational level is completely devoid of the natural level. It does have a necessary amount of the natural level because the rational level alone is generally not enough for the carrying out of actions. In the same way, the natural level also contains some element of the rational level. In short, both levels contain an element of the other. However, they are differentiated on the basis of the level which is overwhelming and overpowering."

The gist of all this is that H̲ad̲rat Wālā neither rejects spiritual conditions outright nor does he give more than necessary value to them. Instead, he instructs the seekers that when they experience praiseworthy conditions, they must consider them to be such and be grateful. However, they must not consider them to be the objectives, as signs of perfection, essentials of the path or the essentials of piety.

Differentiating between thoughts and conditions

There are some instances where – provided there is no reason to prevent it – H̲ad̲rat Wālā congratulates the person on experiencing certain spiritual conditions in order to encourage him further. However, he does not consider every condition of the seekers to be a spiritual condition. He says in his light-hearted way: "All the conditions which are experienced in this path are not *bāt̲inī* (internal, spiritual). They are also *bat̲nī* (related to the stomach, the physical self) which stem from the damage of the stomach and a light fever in it."

If a seeker informs H̲ad̲rat Wālā of a special condition and he learns through certain indications [that they are physical], he advises the seeker to revert to a specialist physician and have it diagnosed. H̲ad̲rat Wālā adds: "The physician will check whether your heart is weak, there is "dryness" in your brains, whether you have a light fever and so on. In most cases, H̲ad̲rat Wālā's suspicions prove to be correct and it is established that the cause of the condition was physical. H̲ad̲rat Wālā advises such people to consult medical doctors and instructs them to stop all forms of dhikr. Some spiritual masters misdiagnosed the mental thoughts of their associates

and thought they were spiritual conditions. Hadrat Wālā said in this regard: "A shaykh also has to have a certain amount of medical knowledge so that he does not consider thoughts to be conditions."

Love for the shaykh and following the Sunnah

Hadrat Wālā constantly quotes the following statement of Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh* which much emphasis and importance. The Mujaddid said: "Even if thousands of forms of darkness are experienced while having a shaykh and following the Sunnah, they are all considered to be forms of light. But if there is just one shortcoming in this regard [having a shaykh and following the Sunnah] and there are thousands of forms of light, they are all forms of darkness."

Hadrat Wālā very often quotes the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*:

> No matter what a seeker experiences while on the path of Sufism, it is for his own good. O heart! No one goes astray while on a straight path.

However, Hadrat Wālā also says: "There are two requisites for it. One is the coming and the other is the straight path. The essence of the first is that the condition must have come on its own and not brought. In other words, it must be involuntary and not voluntary. The above couplet mentions what one "experiences" [or what comes involuntarily] and not one which is brought. Something which comes on its own is not blameworthy no matter how bad the external may seem. This is because it is involuntary. On the other hand, the one that is brought can be divided into two: praiseworthy and blameworthy. This is the essence of the first prerequisite. The second prerequisite is that it must be on the straight path. The essence of this couplet will thus be: If a seeker remains firm on the straight path, then no matter what type of involuntary condition he experiences – whether agreeable or disagreeable – it is always for the good of the seeker."

Remaining occupied in dhikr and obedience:

Hadrat Wālā says: "A seeker must compel himself to remain occupied in dhikr and obedience. He must neither desire ease nor must he see whether he is benefiting or not. Preoccupation

in dhikr and obedience is the actual objective and the real benefit."

He wrote to a seeker: "Do not allow the heart to demand and await the realization of your objective because this too is an obstacle. It causes confusion which puts an end to concentration and handing one's affairs to Allāh *taʿālā*. The latter two are temporary prerequisites for reaching Allāh *taʿālā*. Establish this firmly within yourself for it is the soul of Sufism."

Hadrat Wālā also says: "Do not wait for enthusiasm and ease to occupy yourself in dhikr and obedience. Instead, impose on yourself to start doing good deeds. Ease will develop gradually from this and so will enthusiasm."

He explained the above theme as follows: "People feel that they should wait until they develop enthusiasm, only then will they commence with actions. Whereas enthusiasm is waiting for the person to commence with his actions so that enthusiasm could be formed."

Continue dhikr whether you feel like it or not

Hadrat Wālā said on one occasion: "Continue dhikr whether you feel like it or not. Gradually you will become so habituated to it that you will not feel restful without it. This is similar to a person who starts smoking the huqqah. Initially, he feels dizzy, he feels nauseous and also vomits. However, when he continues smoking it, he becomes so addicted to it that he will be prepared to forgo his food for two pulls on a huqqah."

He said on another occasion: "There is benefit from the very beginning but the person does not perceive it. Like a child who grows daily but we cannot say with certainty how much he has grown on a particular day. After the passing of some time, when we think of his past state, we realize that he grew to a certain extent when compared to what he is at present. The same applies to dhikr. In the beginning, a person feels as if he is not deriving any benefit at all from it whereas he is deriving benefit all the time. After the passage of some time he compares his present condition to his past and sees a huge difference between the two."

From Hadrat Wālā's example of a growing child I recall another statement which he said to me. After commencing dhikr and

other spiritual practices, I said to him: "I am not benefiting from dhikr as much as I would like." He immediately replied in a very comforting tone: "If a person wants his infant child to turn ten years of age right now, will it happen? He will only turn ten after the passage of ten years."

Dhikr never goes to waste

A person wrote to Hadrat Wālā and said that he does not perceive any benefit. Hadrat Wālā replied: "The dhikr which you are engaged in at present should not be considered to be useless. All of it is being collected. Allāh willing, it will all be exposed to you."

Hadrat Wālā said: "A drop of water falls on a rock. When this is followed by many drops, a hole forms in it. Will we say that it was only the last drop which caused the hole to form? Never. Rather, the hole is a result of the collective number of water drops. The first drop had as much influence as the last drop in forming the hole. The first drop should never be considered to be ineffective even though it may appear to be so. In the same way, the dhikr of the first day which is considered to be fruitless is definitely not fruitless. The special condition which will develop at the end would have been influenced by the dhikr of the first day exactly as the influence of the dhikr of the last day. It was not the dhikr of the last day alone which caused this condition. Rather, a collective number was stipulated and it was decided that such and such condition will develop after so many days. Once that number of days was completed, the effect and condition manifested themselves. The dhikr of each and every day has as much influence in creating that condition as the dhikr of the last. For example, a person eats fortified foods or a special soup for a period of time until he becomes strong and full of vigour. Was it the fortified food of the last day only which gave him that vigour? Certainly not. Rather, it was the collective dosage of all those days which resulted in this condition. It is immature to consider the dosage of the first day to be useless."

If there is no dhikr, there should certainly be determination and regret

While emphasising the need to remain attached to one's task, Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "The spiritual masters say:

لا وارد لمن لا ورد له

A person without a spiritual practice cannot experience a spiritual condition.

In fact, they go to the extent of saying: "If a person cannot engage in dhikr, he should at least make a determination to do it and regret not doing it."

In short, two things are most essential in this path, viz. continuous striving and awareness. A seeker had written a lengthy letter in which he described his failure. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "The objective is to see the objective [Allāh *taʿālā*]. The way of doing this is to see striving. As long as there is a defect in this regard, then the prelude to seeing the objective is determination to strive. Allāh willing, this will inspire a person to strive. He will then realize the objective of seeing the objective [Allāh *taʿālā*]. This is the sequence which has to be followed. Allāh willing, it will be completed and realized gradually in an excellent way. However, you will have to remain attached to the task at hand. If any shortcoming is experienced, you must continue striving to realize your objective. Allāh willing, you will not be deprived. I too am praying for you."

We see how Hadrat Wālā continually emphasises on the seekers to impose on themselves to continue with the task at hand. He says: "Success can only be realized through striving. Those who strive in this path are never unsuccessful because Allāh *taʿālā* has promised:

مَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَسَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا

Whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it while he is a believer, then the striving of such people is acknowledged.[1]

While speaking on the same subject on one occasion, Hadrat Wālā added this one essential prerequisite: "When a person formally studies under a shaykh and then engages in dhikr, he experiences success."

I said to him: "Dhikr is something which always brings success, it does not need a shaykh as a go-between." Hadrat Wālā replied: "It is essentially dhikr which brings the success, but the mediation of a shaykh is also necessary. For example,

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 19.

the blade of a sword does the cutting, but it is essential for it to be in someone's hand [who is going to wield it]."

By and large, Hadrat Wālā delivers lengthy and forceful speeches on the benefit and need for a shaykh's companionship. He says: "The rectification that can be achieved by remaining in a shaykh's company cannot be achieved by being far from him. The physical treatment a person can receive while staying under the wing of a physician cannot be received while being far from him. Moreover, by remaining close to a shaykh, a seeker continually observes and adopts his character and acts of worship, and absorbs his excellent qualities. In this way, the "colour" of the shaykh comes on to him with each passing day. Furthermore, if a person does not spend a considerable amount of time in the company of his shaykh, he cannot develop affinity with him. Generally, deriving benefit from this path is dependent on affinity with one's shaykh."

The need for a shaykh's company

There was a seeker who spent time in Hadrat Wālā's company just once. He continued writing to Hadrat Wālā for many years and felt this was sufficient. However, when he was overcome by a calamity, he experienced doubts even about his beliefs despite being very firm on Dīn. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. When Hadrat Wālā heard about his condition, he said: "If a person does not remain in the company of his shaykh, he cannot develop affinity." When this person wrote to Hadrat Wālā and sought his answers to some doubts and misgivings which he had about certain matters related to Islam, Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "If you contract an illness which necessitates remaining under the direct care of a doctor, what do you think you will have to do in such a situation?" Hadrat Wālā meant that there is a need for him to come and stay in his company, but he wrote it in a tone which displayed his own independence.

The key to success

Love for one's shaykh is synonymous to total and complete affinity. Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "Love for one's shaykh is the key to success and the key to all joys and blessings."

However, Hadrat Wālā never allowed love for one's shaykh to go beyond its limits among his associates. He considered rational

love, i.e. obedience to be totally sufficient because natural love is not voluntary, and a person is not accountable for involuntary matters. The letter of a seeker is quoted to serve as an example:

> Condition: I extend my hand in prayer before Allāh *taʿālā* to create love for Hadrat Wālā in my heart. However, not even an iota of love is developing in my heart. This is causing me a lot of restlessness and discomfort.
>
> Reply: There are different forms of love. One of them is the one which you already have. A clear indication of it is that the possibility of a lack of it is causing you to become restless.
>
> Condition: Very often I visualize Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, direct him towards me and read the following couplet with real enthusiasm and yearning:
>
> O Khidr! Help this bashful person because I am going on foot and my companion is riding.
>
> Reply: There is absolutely no need for this.
>
> Condition: Visualization of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* remains for a short while. It is then wiped out and I perceive an attention and attraction towards Allāh *taʿālā* on a special path.
>
> Reply: Glory to Allāh! This turning towards Allāh *taʿālā* is the actual objective and love for one shaykh is the means to realizing it. If Allāh *taʿālā* confers this objective to a person while he does not have the least amount of the normal love for his shaykh, but he obeys and follows his shaykh, such a person is most certainly on the true path.
>
> 21 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1334 A.H.

One of Hadrat Wālā's khulafā' wrote complaining about his lack of affinity. His letter together with Hadrat Wālā's reply is quoted from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*.

> Condition: When I look at Hadrat Wālā's extensive knowledge and understanding, and my own deficiencies, I experience a state of despondency.

Most of the time I feel aggrieved over the fact that I have not developed any affinity with Hadrat Wālā. I do not understand what I should do.

Reply: This is also a type of compatibility that one understands that he is incompatible. Consider the fact that a servant has a relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* whereas how can there be a relationship between a mortal and the Eternal? Thus, the meaning of relationship will be that one realizes the height of Allāh's grandeur and how insignificant the servant is. This type of understanding is called compatibility in the technical sense. After all, "how can dust be compared to the Eternal!"

Condition: I cannot even fully express whatever is in my heart.

Reply: This too is a branch of that absence of affinity which is really affinity. (Note: This refers to involuntary affinity with one's shaykh. As for voluntary affinity, its acquisition is essential).

Hadrat Wālā prohibits his associates from unnecessary intentional visualization of one's shaykh because of some of the harms which it entails. However, if it takes place unintentionally, he does not compel the person to repulse it. Instead, he says that it is beneficial. In short, there is neither excess nor shortcoming with Hadrat Wālā. This is the real quality of a spiritual master.

The prerequisite for benefiting from companionship

When speaking about the benefits of companionship of a shaykh Hadrat Wālā says: "The companionship of a shaykh is only beneficial when a seeker remains occupied in the dhikr and spiritual practices which the shaykh instructed him to carry out. There are some people who are always moving around and remaining with pious personalities but do not do anything themselves. They do not acquire anything. They always remain deprived. Some people spend a lot of time in a shaykh's company and also take out a little time to engage in some sort of dhikr. This too is insufficient. A major portion of the time ought to be spent in dhikr and spiritual practices, only then is a shaykh's company of benefit."

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to the amount of dhikr: "It should neither be too much to the extent of causing fatigue nor so less that no fatigue at all is experienced. Instead, the amount should be such that although it causes some fatigue, the person is able to bear doing it continually. A little fatigue is necessary to derive benefit. This is so that the self experiences some striving."

The extent and nature of dhikr

Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "Impose on yourself only that amount which you can carry out with continuity. But if you find an opportunity and feel energetic, you may do more. The wisdom behind this is that you will be protected against the misfortune of missing it and safeguarded from anxiety. Both of which are harmful. Furthermore, when you are inspired to do more, you will experience joy and your courage will increase."

The above is with regard to the extent of dhikr. As for its nature, he says in this regard: "Choose the manner which interests you more. The one in which you have more interest will be more beneficial. However, be especially mindful of the heart not demanding you to complete your quota quickly. If a person's manner of dhikr itself is fast and flowing, there is no harm in it. But there must be no demand from the self to try and complete as quickly as possible."

We had quoted a letter previously. We are quoting it again because it applies to this discussion. A novice seeker wrote: "I am living far from Hadrat. How can I engage in dhikr in the correct manner?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "What is so difficult about it? Ensure that the heart and tongue join in the dhikr. This is the correct manner."

The same person also requested: Please ask such and such khalīfah of yours to demonstrate to me the method of the 12 tasbīhs.

Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no need for it. These restrictions [to the number of tasbīhs] are not the objectives. The sole objective is dhikr. If one person is travelling at a very average speed and another at a fast speed, the two will still reach their destination. As for the actual speed, this contains additional benefits and wisdoms for which the actual destination is not dependent."

Do not worry about restrictions and subtleties

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to restrictions and dhikr: "Nowadays the temperaments are weak. This is why restrictions are by and large causes of confusion. A person should therefore not give any importance to them. In the same way, a person should not worry about the Latā'if Sittah because they too cause confusion. The essential thing is the heart. All one's focus should be on it. When it becomes illuminated, the Latā'if automatically become illuminated. This has been the way of our Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and is supported by the following Hadīth:

إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله، ألا وهي القلب.

There is a piece of flesh in the body. If it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is ruined, the entire body will be ruined. Listen! It is the heart.

Focussing on Allāh at the time of dhikr

A seeker wrote to Hadrat Wālā: "I am trying to practise the Latā'if Sittah." He replied: "The realities are the objectives, not the Latā'if."

Hadrat Wālā says: "If it can be done easily, one must focus on the Being who is being remembered in the dhikr. If a person cannot do this, he must focus on the dhikr itself." During my initial stages, Hadrat Wālā taught me to meditate and imagine that my heart is joining me in the dhikr which my tongue is making, and that it is a partner in my dhikr."

As far as I can remember, he also taught a novice seeker to meditate and imagine that the Ka'bah is in front of him in the course of his dhikr. And when sending salutations, he must imagine the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is before him. In other words, he is standing before the grave of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and sending salutations, and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is becoming pleased with him.

In short, Hadrat Wālā will see the capability and inclination of each seeker and teach him a method which would suit him best. If it can be done easily, he informs them that the most superior and beneficial form of visualization is that of the Being of Allāh *ta'ālā*. In fact, he considers it to be the fundamental

objective. However, in every situation he emphasises that excessive efforts must not be put into focus and concentration or else the heart and mind will become afflicted and concentration will be lost. Too much of effort causes fatigue and grief. This in turn will put an end to all benefit. Just a moderate and balanced focus is enough. By doing this, complete proficiency is achieved gradually and a person is able to enjoy complete and total focus and concentration. To sum up, too much of effort in this regard is harmful. Only that much is sufficient as much as a weak memorizer of the Qur'ān needs – he thinks carefully while reading from memory."

Prerequisite for dhikr to be beneficial

Hadrat Wālā gives a lot of importance to explaining an essential prerequisite for dhikr to be of benefit. He says: "Dhikr should not be made without concentration with the mere intention of completing the prescribed number of repetitions. Instead, the seeker must do it with the intention of deriving benefit and blessings from it. He must have this intention all the time. However, he must not be on the look out to see the benefit or wait for it. This is harmful because it causes confusion. A major reason why many people are deprived of the blessings of dhikr is that they do not do it with the intention of benefit."

Hadrat Wālā placed a lot of emphasis on this subject in his *Tarīq Qalandar*. Necessary portions of it were quoted previously. The essence of this subject is that the reason why people do not develop love for Allāh *taʿālā* through good deeds is that they do not do them with the intention of acquiring Allāh's love. They merely do them with an empty mind."

The limits of "loud" and "soft" dhikr

Hadrat Wālā teaches a slightly loud form of dhikr. At the same time, if a person's voice becomes loud later on because of his zeal, he must allow it to get loud; there is no need to suppress it. However, if it is going to cause disturbance and confusion to people who are asleep or those who are performing salāh, he emphasises that it must be absolutely silent. He says that in such instances loud dhikr is definitely not permissible. There was a person who used to engage in so loud dhikr at the time of tahajjud that his voice used to carry to the entire neighbourhood. Hadrat Wālā emphatically prohibited him. Similarly, an elderly seeker wrote: "Sometimes because of

people who are sleeping nearby and sometimes in order to remove my fatigue, I engage in silent dhikr instead of loud dhikr. Is there any harm in this?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no harm in it. In fact, it is superior and more beneficial."

Do not confine to dhikr with the heart

However, Hadrat Wālā did not confine to dhikr with the heart because it causes absent-mindedness in most cases, while the seeker is deceived into thinking that he is engaged in dhikr with the heart. A seeker had wrote to Hadrat Wālā about his interest in dhikr with the heart. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "Do not confine yourself to dhikr with the heart. Dhikr with the tongue is also necessary – even if it causes a decrease in dhikr with the heart."

Hadrat Wālā explains the wisdom behind this: "When dhikr with the heart is accompanied by dhikr with the tongue, the advantage of it is that if a person loses interest in dhikr with the heart – as it happens quite often – and he stops making dhikr with it, then at least the tongue will be continuing in dhikr and occupied in worship. On the other hand, if a person engages in dhikr with the heart alone and then loses interest in it, neither will the heart nor the tongue be engaged in dhikr. The tongue had not been engaged since before, and now the heart too is not engaged in it. In short, a person's time will pass in absolute heedlessness without even realizing it."

Continuity in dhikr

Before prescribing any dhikr, Hadrat Wālā would first inquire about the seeker's present spiritual practices. If any of his practice – whether in deed or in belief – is against the Sharīʿah, he would ask him to give it up. However, he asks him to continue doing the remainder because the best of deeds are those which are done with continuity. Continuity creates blessings.

There was a time in my life when I did not have sufficient time. I asked Hadrat Wālā about leaving out the different forms of dhikr which are normally read after the five salāhs. He replied: "No, no, you must not leave them. They are extremely blessed. Do not consider them insignificant merely because they are so concise."

Apart from the blessings, Hadrat Wālā says that a seeker is more enthusiastic about continuing with previous forms of dhikr. Since he is more enthusiastic about them, they will be easier for him to carry out and he will fulfil them with concentration and continuity. This will be most beneficial to him as opposed to new forms of dhikr. It is therefore to a seeker's advantage to maintain the previous forms of dhikr. However, if a seeker's previous forms of dhikr are so many that he will not be able to carry out the spiritual practices which are prescribed by the spiritual masters – practices which would be more helpful to a person to create firmness in dhikr – Hadrat Wālā would reduce his previous forms of dhikr to ten percent of the original. In this way, the seeker will be carrying out one tenth but still reaping the full reward – in the light of the verse: "The one who does a single good deed shall be rewarded ten times the like thereof." Hadrat Wālā says that at least the person will receive his rewards, I do not like to remove it completely.

Consideration to the seeker when prescribing the amount of dhikr

Hadrat Wālā prescribes to a seeker a form of dhikr which is most appropriate to the seeker at that particular time, in that specific condition, and a form with which he has affinity and is most enthusiastic about. Based on the specific condition of a seeker, Hadrat Wālā considers the dhikr which he prescribed for him to be most beneficial. Instead of prescribing dhikr for a particular person, he prescribed excessive recitation of the Qur'ān for him. The man was overjoyed and said: "I am deeply in love with reciting the Qur'ān." For another person, Hadrat Wālā prescribed excessive optional salāhs. The man displayed his intense attachment to it. If a person becomes bored with and experiences boredom from excessive dhikr and lengthy periods of solitude, Hadrat Wālā advises him to undertake a journey for a few days. He must go around meeting his friends and relatives and occupy himself in lawful activities. He must go back into solitude once he regains his enthusiasm and zest. Anyway, he prohibits the seekers from giving up lawful activities totally. This was explained in detail previously.

Spiritual practices must not be missed out

Hadrat Wālā emphasises the completion of spiritual practices even if they are done without ablution – where there is an excuse for this – or done while walking and moving about. The

reason for this is that it is most unblessed to miss out after having laid down and established a practice. This is also emphasised in a Hadīth. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

يا عبد الله لا تكن مثل فلان كان يصلي بالليل ثم تركه

O ʿAbdullāh! Do not be like such and such person who used to perform optional salāh at night and then gave it up.

Missing out spiritual practices is similar to a person who establishes a bond with his ruler. He starts frequenting him, becomes closely attached to him, but then stops going to him altogether. The ruler will be very offended. As for the one who does not establish a special bond, there can be no complaint against him provided he establishes a bond in absentia with his shaykh, for it is essential.

Concession to students

Generally Hadrat Wālā would not instruct students of Dīn to occupy themselves in dhikr for this may interfere with their studies. Apart from dhikr taking away their time, seekers become so attached to dhikr that their interest in studying diminishes. However, since rectification of one's deeds is compulsory under all conditions and it does not interfere with one's time – in fact, a person saves time because he gives up futile activities – Hadrat Wālā permits students to correspond with him. He even goes to the extent of advising them to write to him. When my son was busy studying, Hadrat Wālā said to him with real affection and feeling: "You must write to me periodically and inform me of the faults which you perceive within yourself. Allāh willing, I will show you simple and easy procedures which will be very easy for you to follow. What can be more easier than this: I permit you to not even act on my words of advice. However, you must continually seek my advice on matters concerning your rectification. Allāh willing, you will see that even this will be very beneficial to you."

This discussion has prolonged and I do not even intend covering all aspects. I am therefore concluding this point.

Developing the quality of self-obliteration

Hadrat Wālā constantly says with much emphasis: "Self-obliteration is the first step in this path. The person in whom

this quality has not developed must understand that he does not have even a whiff of the path. The spiritual masters say that self-obliteration is the final step in this path. This is also absolutely correct. It refers to perfection in self-obliteration because there are, after all, different levels of self-obliteration."

A well-known Nadwī scholar happened to spend a few hours in Hadrat Wālā's company. When he was departing, he asked Hadrat Wālā for some advice. Hadrat Wālā relates: "I was hesitant in saying anything because he was such an erudite scholar, what advice could I give him? Allāh *taʿālā* then instilled a certain theme in my heart which I later learnt was most appropriate to his situation. I said to him: 'Hadrat! What advice can I give to a senior person like you! However, I will present to you the essence of the path which I deduced from my life-long experience. The essence which I deduced is known as self-obliteration and servitude. As far as possible, continue obliterating yourself. All spiritual exercises and strivings are done with this purpose. One's entire life must be spent in acquiring self-obliteration and servitude.' He was so much affected by these words that tears flowed from his eyes. And rightly so because this is a quality which all the spiritual masters have been teaching through the generations. This is especially so among the Chishtī spiritual masters."

Two golden principles with regard to emptying and embellishing one's self

Two golden principles of Hadrat Wālā are presented here. One is with regard to emptying one's self and the other is with regard to embellishing one's self. However, there is a common denominator between the two, viz. imposing on one's self to practice. As regards the first point, a seeker wrote: "I find it very difficult on myself to abstain from casting evil glances. Kindly show me a way which, if I practise on it, I will develop a natural aversion to this despicable action."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is no way apart from courage and bearing hardships. There are two factors which will assist you, viz. consciousness of punishment and excessive dhikr."

As regards embellishing one's self, a seeker wrote: "Kindly show me a way of acquiring conviction."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Impose on yourself to do good deeds. The blessings of this imposition will create conviction. There is no other way."

In short, Hadrat Wālā attaches a lot of importance to imposing actions on one's self. He quotes the following couplets of Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* a lot:

> Continue digging in this path, do not take a rest for even a single moment.
>
> So that even in your final moment you will be striving and the kindness of Allāh *taʿālā* may be on you.
>
> The Beloved loves this worry and concern on your part. Even a fruitless effort is better than sleeping [doing nothing].
>
> Do something or the other. Do not be lazy. Continue scratching and scraping a little soil at a time.
>
> When you continue removing a little soil daily from the hole, you will eventually reach a point where you will find pure water.
>
> If you sit at the entrance of an alley, you will certainly see someone's face.

Hadrat Wālā also quotes the following couplets quite often:

> I do not withdraw my hand from seeking so that I may acquire my objective. I will continue seeking until my body reaches the Beloved or my life leaves my body.
>
> Whether I find Him or not, I will continue searching. Whether I acquire or not, I should at least have hopes of acquiring.
>
> Continue striving. Go beyond mere words. This path needs striving and nothing else.
>
> The path needs action not claims, because claims without actions are of no essence.

A complete way of rectification

I now conclude this second section related to teaching and training with a most beneficial and complete course of action. Hadrat Wālā prescribed it just recently for a new Muslim who is a genuine seeker. This course is of such a nature that every seeker can adopt it as his own course of action. The seeker's

letter together with Hadrat Wālā's replies are quoted from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*.

> Condition: I have a serious illness, viz. when I wish to write a letter to Hadrat Wālā, I do not know what to write. When I look at my evils and intend writing to Hadrat Wālā so that I may be rectified, I get occupied in thinking about which evil I should write about first. My preoccupation in thinking about this results in leaving out writing altogether. Then when I decide on writing about a particular evil, I think to myself that if I put my mind to it, I can give it up. I should therefore try to give it up first by myself. If I am unsuccessful, I will write to Hadrat Wālā. I become so engrossed in all these thoughts that writing to Hadrat Wālā gets left completely, and the evils remain within me as they always had been there. I try my utmost but do not succeed. The stronger the resolution I make, the quicker it breaks. I am therefore confused and concerned about how my rectification will be realized when I cannot even be steadfast on a particular matter. I now request Hadrat Wālā to be so kind as to prescribe a treatment for me. I also request Hadrat Wālā's prayers so that I may gain salvation from all evils.
>
> Reply: The treatment for it is this: You must take a page and list all your evils. As you remember other evils, add to this list. You must also continue treating them. The evils which are completely uprooted after treating them must be removed from the list. Those that remain – whether totally or partially – leave them on the list. Then when you sit down to write to me, draw a lot in order to specify one particular evil. Write to me about the one in whose favour the lot falls. If you have treated it partially, mention that in your letter as well. In this way, there will be no confusion when you sit down to write to me. I am also praying for you. Was salām.

A seeker's letter and its reply

A seeker wrote that he requests Hadrat Wālā to teach him how to rectify his deeds. As per his habit, Hadrat Wālā asked the

seeker to explain the meaning of rectification of deeds. He wrote back as follows:

> Sometimes I become lazy in carrying out the pillars of Islam. Even if I take the courage to carry out some of them, I experience no peace and concentration whatsoever. I am totally devoid of the happiness and joy which a person is supposed to experience when worshipping Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, I experience certain impediments and obstacles in acquiring the sciences of the Sharīʿah and in my occupation with the different branches of Dīn which cause a constriction in my heart and mind. I therefore beg Hadrat Wālā to check the above-mentioned ailments, provide a treatment for them and make it easy for me to follow the Sharīʿah.

Hadrat Wālā then addressed those who were present by saying: "Look! People are concerned about matters which are beyond their control. They want Allāh *taʿālā* to confer all these things to them, but who can take such a responsibility? They do not want to bear any burden at all whereas this path contains 'chickpeas of steel' which they have to chew on for the rest of their lives."

The story of a lawyer

A lawyer wrote a lengthy life story in which he mentioned that he became a murīd of an ignorant man of expositions who previously led a life of a mad-man. The man then became engrossed in worldly matters and stopped the lawyer from acquiring knowledge of jurisprudence. This is why he severed his ties with the man. The lawyer described some of the conditions which he experienced during the period when he was aligned to the man, and also about some of the conditions which he experienced due to simāʿ and so on. He also wrote about his deep interest in Hadrat Wālā's written works and the fact that he severed ties from the above-mentioned man since the last two years. He added: "I feel myself inclined towards you and have developed a deep bond with your thoughts and lectures. I earnestly request you to advise me on what to do for the future."

It was a very long story to which Hadrat Wālā replied in a unique manner. He wrote: "A person asked a hunch-backed

man: 'Would you like to be cured or would you like others to become hunch-backed as well?' He replied: 'I would like others to become hunch-backed so that I could laugh at them just as they laugh at me.' This is my example – I am merely a student who would like to take others through the same course which I am studying. You must have gauged my advice from this. You must now think about an advice for yourself."

Short and concise speech

"When it comes to the path [of Sufism], I am very particular about speaking concisely but comprehensively. Consequently, I prescribed a treatment for bad character in two words: "forethought and forbearance". In other words, before doing anything, think whether it is lawful in the Sharīʿah or not. Secondly, do not hasten, be forbearing. These two words are concise and also rhyme (the Urdu is *ta'ammul wa tahammul*). It makes it easy to remember them. A friend said to me that this is prose in the form of poetry."

Abstain from interfering in other people's affairs

"It is not my habit to interfere in any matter. I am overwhelmed by bashfulness so I do not desire to meddle in any matter on my own accord. I think to myself: 'It has nothing to do with me, why should I interfere?' If a person needs to consult with me a hundred thousand times as regards his rectification, he is free to do so. But if a person has no concern for his rectification, why should I run after him? If I am ever overcome by affection, I will draw his attention to it in a soft manner."

Faith and love

Maulānā said: "I prefer love to faith [in a person] because faith is based on one's thoughts and it could be removed very easily. On the other hand, love does not get wiped out."

Etiquette before bay'ah

"I asked a few questions to a person. He was unnecessarily lazy and delayed in answering them. He answered one question after the other after a very long pause. He then requested bayʿah to me. I said: You must first learn etiquette and manners, and then request bayʿah. You still do not have any manners – a person asked you questions and you inconvenienced him by making him wait for your answers."

Rectification of deeds before dhikr and spiritual practices

"When a person is engaged in dhikr and other spiritual practices, I do not value him until I see his deeds coming right. There is enjoyment in dhikr, a person can die if he does not do it. On the other hand, deeds are those in which there is a burden and a person still does them to acquire Allāh's pleasure. Similarly, a person must be prepared to bear difficulties while fulfilling the rights of others." A person who was engrossed in dhikr incurred some debts and was very lax in paying them. Hadrat Wālā made the above statement on that occasion and expelled him saying: "You can only come here after you pay off your debts. You cannot come here until you pay off your debts."

A habitual defaulter is not pardoned

Hadrat Wālā said: "When I learn that a person is in the habit of committing a certain mistake, I do not feel like pardoning him until he gets rid off it. If a person commits a mistake occasionally, there is no objection to pardoning him. I never want to keep a person who tramples on the rights of others."

Manners and integrity are more important than education

"I do not pay so much of attention to teaching and educating as I do to manners, character and integrity. Attention to teaching and educating is given everywhere, but no one bothers about character. For example, I do not look too much at who performed salāh with congregation and who did not because, firstly, a person could have a valid excuse. Secondly, not performing it with congregation affects the person himself and not others. On the other hand, if a person does something unmannerly, I take him to task to the full because it inconveniences others."

Preparation before bay'ah

Hadrat Wālā said: "When a person requests bayʿah, I first write a list of books which he must read, especially my lectures because I find a lot of benefit in doing this. If a person writes to me and says that he has already studied the books, I ask him: 'What changes did you make to your condition after studying them?' The benefit of this is that what can be achieved in this short while is not normally achieved over many years. I put the person to work from the very first day, but people do not value

it. The fundamental thing is concern. When man has a concern, he seeks a way out. I therefore place a weight on the seeker's head in my first conversation with him or in my first letter to him. This creates a concern in him, and the concern automatically lays open the path before him."

Principles Related To Correspondence

Different themes are not to be written in the same letter

Hadrat Wālā does not tolerate several themes in a single letter. For example, juridical rulings and issues related to Sufism being asked in the same letter. Since juridical rulings are more important and it is necessary to hasten in replying to them, he writes answers to them only, provided he does not have to refer to any books in order to find an answer. Most of the time, Hadrat Wālā does not have the time to refer to books. With reference to the questions on Sufism, he would say to the person: "You must write a separate letter and ask me those questions." Sometimes, in order to reprimand the person, he does not reply at all.

The wisdom behind this prohibition

The wisdom behind not permitting the combination of juridical rulings and Sufi issues in a single letter is that it is distracting and one cannot gauge which is the real issue at hand which needs an answer. Furthermore, there is also the possibility of mixing up issues for both parties. This is a matter which has to be avoided. In addition to this, it takes up a lot of time. The large number of letters which Hadrat Wālā receives and his many other preoccupations do not leave him with enough time.

A person who would like to fulfil the duty of serving Allāh's creation and to see to the needs of all needy persons will have no alternative but to lay down restrictions of this nature. If not, efforts to please everyone may result in not pleasing anyone at all. Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "If I were to sit down and devote myself to just one task, all other tasks and responsibilities will be left by the side. I prefer doing a little of everything for everyone because they all have rights."

Questions must be posed in a good mannered way

Hadrat Wālā also says in this regard: "People send lengthy letters and ask me to reply to them. I write back and tell them: I do not have so much of time to reply to all your questions at

once. You should rather identify those questions for which you need an answer. Then write just one question in one letter and send it to me. Once you receive its answer – whether in one letter or over several letters – send me the next question and obtain its answer. In this way, you can continue sending me your questions one after the other. You can then collate all the answers and publish them if you like.”

Hadrat Wālā says: “I have no objection to serving people provided the service is requested in a proper manner and I am only asked what is in my line of work. If a person can do some of it himself, he must do it; he must not place the entire burden on me. In this way, even if a person were to take services from me for his entire life, I will be most happy to carry them out. After all, it is my work to serve my fellow Muslims as much as I can and however I can.”

Hadrat Wālā continues: “It is very easy for people to place their burdens on others, but when they themselves are asked to do something, they sit back. I explained the above procedure to many people but because they themselves had to do something, they remained seated. However, after this announcement, one person asked me for an answer to just one question, and then he too gave up and sat back. He wanted answers to some of the misgivings about the Bahā'ī sect. I wrote to him and said the same thing to him: Send me one question at a time and attribute the question to yourself, not to someone else because I cannot address someone who is absent.”

“Subsequently, he wrote one question and sent it to me. I answered his question and made up my mind to continue this correspondence. I even had this answer copied separately so that future answers could be added to this one. But that person only wrote this one letter and could not be disciplined enough to continue writing.”

A request to be excluded from the prohibition of one subject per letter

One of Hadrat Wālā’s principles as mentioned above was that only one subject must be written in a letter. Some people wrote to him and requested that they be excluded from this rule because they are poor and do not have the money to keep on writing. Hadrat Wālā replied: “If am going to start making exceptions to this rule, how will I remember to whom this

exception was made? Moreover, if these exceptions are accepted, the rules and principles will no longer remain rules. Furthermore, when will the reason behind which the rule was laid down be fulfilled? Therefore, I cannot accept this request. However, if you are really in need, you may make a collection specifically for this purpose, and I too will be most pleased to join in this regard."

I [the compiler] say: Some people did exactly as told and Hadrat Wālā joined them very happily. Consequently, there are still some people whom Hadrat Wālā assists for this purpose. He is prepared to do this, but he will never tolerate people breaking his rules and principles."

The letter must not be pretentious

Hadrat Wālā disapproves of pretentiousness in writing because it can cause more confusion and the real feelings of the writer cannot be gauged correctly. Hadrat Wālā was especially particular about prohibiting the seekers of the spiritual path from doing this. If anyone writes in Arabic merely to show off his abilities, Hadrat Wālā would reply in Urdu. He would write: "I cannot write Arabic so freely, while you can. You are therefore better than me. A better person must not revert to one who is lesser than him. You should therefore revert to someone who is more capable than me."

A reply to a person who wrote in Arabic

Incidentally, Hadrat Wālā received a letter in Arabic. His reply is quoted verbatim. He wrote: "A prerequisite for one to benefit from another is for the one who is conveying benefits must be better than the one who is seeking them. You are writing in Arabic – although you are writing incorrectly and I do not write incorrectly – so you are therefore better. The above-mentioned prerequisite is therefore not found. Thus, you cannot benefit from me."

Another person sought permission to write in Arabic and gave his reason that it is the language of the people of Paradise. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "Take an oath and write to me and say that if you come here you will speak only in Arabic." The man could not give any sound reply.

The above replies are only given to those who write unnecessarily in Arabic. Where there is a genuine reason, e.g.

someone who writes from the Arab lands, then Hadrat Wālā makes it a point to reply in Arabic.

When Hadrat Wālā says to those who write to him in Arabic to revert to someone better than himself, those same people start writing in Urdu. In fact, some of them frankly admit that they had written in Arabic solely to display their abilities. Hadrat Wālā also stops the seekers from writing poetry. He says that it is uncultured and disrespectful to write poetry and quote it before one whom you consider to be your senior. However, he excuses those who are overcome by their spiritual conditions. Hadrat Wālā also stops those who go to extremes in using many titles of respect and honour.

Replies to a lawyer's letters

Just recently, a new seeker who studied Western education and is a senior lawyer wrote in a letter to Hadrat Wālā and referred to himself as a low slave in the court of Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā replied in such a comprehensive and subtle manner that the person had no alternative but to accept what he said. Hadrat Wālā wrote: "If I develop pride from such words, my illness increases. If I was humbled by them, I feel restricted. In both cases, there is physical or spiritual harm."

The lawyer expressed his sorrow at losing his previous letter which he had written to Hadrat Wālā with utmost enthusiasm. The man considered it his misfortune. Hadrat Wālā drew his attention by saying: "I do not consider it good for a Muslim to admit his misfortune. A Muslim is never unfortunate. For example, as regards this very incident wherein you lost your letter and you felt grieved. You were rewarded for it. Now is this misfortune or good fortune? However, evils which are committed voluntarily could be referred to as losses."

The same lawyer had also written: "Hadrat! Train and tutor this immature and untrained person." Hadrat Wālā replied: "Training can only be done by senior persons. A worthless person like myself is in need of training himself. How can I train others? However, I cannot refuse to serve anyone when I am asked to serve in the path."

He also wrote: "I feel intimidated when I am in your presence, and when I am away from you and sit down to write to you, my pen trembles." Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "Do not even allow such thoughts to come into your heart. You may write to your

heart's desire whatever comes to your mind and without consideration of any rules and regulations. There are just two or three points which need to be considered. I referred to it as the path above. The first point is that the incident which you wish to relate must be written clearly. Do not resort to flowery language. Secondly, do not allow the letter to be unnecessarily long. Thirdly, a single letter must not contain more than one subject matter. But if there is a link between several matters, they will be counted as one."

Replies to a person using vague words

Sometimes a person may present his request in vague words. For example, accept me in slavery, cover me under your wing, turn your gaze of attention towards me, etc. etc. Hadrat Wālā will reply: "Leave these vague words and write clearly what you really want." Similarly, if a seeker writes: Undertake my rectification, steer and guide me, show me the way to Allāh or any other similar request, Hadrat Wālā writes back: "Write an explanation to what you are saying." He does this so that if the person misunderstood the actual import of these words, he could explain them to him. In short, Hadrat Wālā does not initiate a programme of training as long as the objective is not clearly delineated. If a seeker considers a non-objective to be his objective despite Hadrat Wālā drawing his attention to this, he excuses himself from training and tutoring the person. Hadrat Wālā would write to such a person: "I do not consider it to be the objective and purpose in Dīn. If this is what you consider it to be, revert to someone else because I do not know how to acquire and realize this objective of yours."

A reply to a doctor's letter

There was a learned doctor who belonged to another spiritual lineage. He had misunderstood the correct meaning of the verse:

اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ

Listen! In the remembrance of Allāh lies the tranquillity of the hearts.

The doctor repeatedly asked Hadrat Wālā about the means of acquiring tranquillity of the heart and Hadrat Wālā repeatedly explained to him – in his unique way of teaching a person – that this was not the objective. When the doctor persisted,

Hadrat Wālā wrote the same reply as quoted above. After answering his questions which he posed in one of his letters, Hadrat Wālā replied to his final request as follows: "All the preludes which you mentioned are questionable. So how can such claims be made. However, I do not like to enter into long drawn out discussions on this subject. If – according to you – all claims are correct and such tranquillity of heart is the objective in Dīn, then my final answer is that I do not know the prescription for it. You must revert to some other physician."

The doctor realized his folly and wrote back:

> Respect Hadrat! May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to benefit from your continued existence and may He continue showering your blessings on us. As-salāmu ʿalaykum. I felt honoured and blessed to receive your letter. I re-read my past letters and the present letter very carefully and realized my incorrect views. The reality was exposed to me and I was blessed by Hadrat's attention. Indeed, goodness is not dependent on natural tranquillity (and it only needs knowledge and capability), nor can such tranquillity be an objective in Dīn. Hadrat's replies which were comprehensive but subtle warnings and guidelines proved to be most beneficial to me. Allāh willing, they will be of use to me in the future as well."

Hadrat Wālā expressed his happiness and wrote back: "May knowledge do you a lot of good."

Letters which did not come with self-addressed reply envelops

Apart from a few special persons, Hadrat Wālā abstained from replying to a letter which did not include a self-addressed reply envelop. He did this because receiving a reply rests with the one who asks for a reply; not the one who gives the reply. Hadrat Wālā himself is very strict in observing this rule. Even when he has to write to one of his attendants for some work, he will certainly include a reply envelop. He says: "Since it is my work, why should I place the burden of paying for the postage on him?" Although most of his attendants pay for the postage from their side and send the reply, and return Hadrat Wālā's stamped postcard or envelop, Hadrat Wālā never places this burden on them from his side.

Replying to letters without any delay

Hadrat Wālā is extremely particular about replying to letters without any delay. Rarely will you find someone who is so particular in this regard. Those who correspond with him are able to calculate when they will receive their replies. If there is a delay because of the postal system or some other reason, and they therefore did not receive it on the expected day, they would become doubtful and worried [about Hadrat Wālā's health]. Consequently, some of them would assume that Hadrat Wālā is unwell and would immediately write another letter to inquire about his health. Most of the time, I personally saw Hadrat Wālā receiving fifty letters a day, and most of them used to be quite lengthy. Despite this, Hadrat Wālā replies to all of them on the same day even if it means sitting with them between the ʿasr and maghrib salāhs, maghrib and ʿishā salāhs or even after the ʿishā salāh.

When Hadrat Wālā used to be on a journey, he would receive several days' letters all at once. I myself saw him not sleeping at night until he replied to a reasonable number. In fact, I even saw him returning from a lecture in the middle of the night and then replying to letters despite having a severe headache. He would massage his head and continue replying to the letters. If anyone said to him: "Hadrat! Take a rest now, you can reply to the letters in the morning", Hadrat Wālā would reply: "I have such a demanding temperament that even if I were to leave my work aside and go to sleep, I would not fall asleep. Why, then, should I not just continue with the work?"

Adhering to a strict timetable

Hadrat Wālā's strict adherence to times and ensuring that the day's work is completed in that day have left many people of the courts astounded. They had to acknowledge that no person can carry out so much and so intense mental work by day and night without the help of Allāh *taʿālā* and without spiritual strength. This does not apply to just a few days, rather Hadrat Wālā's entire life was spent in this manner. By the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, he is able to accomplish this same feat even during his present time of weakness and old-age. People are left astounded when they see him after maghrib, after ʿishā, and before fajr with a lantern; and also from after ʿasr to maghrib imposing on his eyes to continue reading and carrying out his writing work.

Without exaggeration, he appears like a machine which is receiving an electric current from the unseen and working tirelessly day and night. This is from the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* which He bestows on whomever He wills. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless Hadrat Wālā with complete and eternal good health and wellbeing, general and perfect blessings, and an extraordinary long life. Āmīn.

Letters are arranged according to rank

The moment Hadrat Wālā receives his post, he devotes his time to it. Letters from special associates are kept one side so that they could be answered first. This distribution is based on recognition of the letters. Thereafter, after reading through the others superficially, he keeps aside those whose subject matter deserves special attention. Letters which require contemplation, are long or there is a need to refer to books before replying to them are generally left aside to be seen in the morning when he is relatively more free and not very occupied. Letters which contain unacceptable subject matter are replied to immediately and sent off to the post office before time. He says with regard to them: "I am discomforted by even having such letters near me."

Replies to those asking for fatwās

Due to his present old age and lack of time, Hadrat Wālā excuses himself – except in special circumstances – from replying to letters which require referring to books and additional research. He replies to such letters as follows: "I neither have the time nor the strength to refer to books. You may ask your question to someone else."

Some people persisted and said: "We are satisfied only by Hadrat Wālā's fatwās." Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "You can get your satisfaction by sending me the replies which you obtained from elsewhere and asking me to sanction them." It has been some time since Hadrat Wālā is gradually passing on his Dīnī services to others. As for replying to fatwās, this he has reduced tremendously. Only special cases are attended to. This was explained in detail in the previous section. He also hands over seekers to his khulafā'. He explained the wisdom behind this on one occasion: "It is certainly most inappropriate for several Dīnī services to be carried out by just one person because man has to experience life and death. When such a

person passes away, so many Dīnī services will terminate. Even this may be for just a few days, it will have an effect on Dīn, or – at least – people in need will remain confused for a few days."

He also said on another occasion: "I distribute Dīnī tasks among several people because I do not want anyone to be traumatized by my death. People will think that so many Dīnī services have now come to an end. I cannot bear to see Muslims suffering even to the extent of expressing sorrow at my demise. This, notwithstanding the fact that putting an end to natural sorrow is beyond my control."

In short, Hadrat Wālā must never be troubled to do such tasks which can be accomplished elsewhere. Now, only letters concerning rectification of deeds may be written to him because this service is not rendered anywhere else on such a level of importance and with such a unique system. Although Hadrat Wālā says that this service is minor in comparison to other services, it is also essential. For example, the large madāris do not teach the primers and alphabets. Large important books are taught there. A small maktab where the primers and alphabets are taught are not considered important. However, if at any time, only the large madāris remain, there will be a need for small makātib to be established so that the primers and alphabets could be taught there.

Prerequisites for replying to letters from women

Based on several underlying wisdoms and reasons, Hadrat Wālā does not reply to any letter from a woman if it is not signed by her husband or mahram. Hadrat Wālā even informed a high-ranking woman who was a principal in a college of this prerequisite. She too had her letter signed by her husband and then sent to him. Close family women are excluded from this.

Attention is paid to comparing the copy to the original

If a person writes to Hadrat Wālā and makes reference to Hadrat Wālā's reply in a previous letter, Hadrat Wālā does not reply to the new letter until he asks for the previous one and checks if it is as claimed. He does not consider a copy to be sufficient because people are generally not particular about relating the entire previous episode. In such instances, Hadrat Wālā writes to the person: "Send my first letter exactly as it is."

If there are several letters of this nature, he instructs the person to arrange them in order and to number them in sequence. However, Hadrat Wālā dislikes such letters to be pinned or tied [stapled] together because he will have to read them all at once and reply to them – all of which requires time and causes discomfort. Easiness lies in having all the letters separate and numbered so that Hadrat Wālā could pick whichever one he wishes to read and reply to it easily. Pinning letters poses the added danger of getting poked. This happened to Hadrat Wālā on several occasions and caused him a lot of discomfort.

Asking for a previous letter does not mean that the writer must not write anything about it. Rather, the matter which he is referring to must be quoted in full in the present letter. The previous letter is only asked for because if the quoted text of the writer is insufficient to fully comprehend what he is saying, then Hadrat Wālā could at least refer to the previous letter. It does not mean that the writer must merely make reference to the previous matter and absolve himself in this way, while Hadrat Wālā has to search for the matter which he is referring to and take the pains of reading it and understanding it.

Hadrat Wālā wrote to a seeker who made the above mistake: "It is against my principles for a person to send two previous letters with the present new letter. Just one previous letter may be sent with the present one. Furthermore, the new letter must contain the complete quotation from the previous one. The previous letter is requested merely as a precaution. I do not have a lot of time, therefore a lot of consideration must be given to providing ease to me."

Replies are written on the very same letter of the seeker

When replying to any matter, Hadrat Wālā draws a line from the matter under discussion and writes his reply in the margin. He continues doing this until the end of the letter. This is done so that the matter under discussion together with its reply may be before the person at one glance and he will be able to understand the reply properly. Hadrat Wālā has therefore laid down this instruction that half or at least one third of each page of a letter must be left blank so that he could write his replies there. The wisdom behind this is so that the subject and its reply remain together. Where there is a need for a correlation between the subject and Hadrat Wālā's reply, he

does not write anything on a post card. Instead, he writes to the person and informs him that a post card cannot suffice such matters. At the same time, Hadrat Wālā does not store such letters while waiting for the person to write back, or else, he will have to contend with safekeeping heaps and heaps of letters. Some people of little understanding respond to this request of Hadrat Wālā by merely posting an envelop to him. Hadrat Wālā then has to write back and ask them for the original subject matter. In such cases, he writes as follows: “Where is the original subject matter for which you require answers? Do you think I have kept it safely with me? You have no right to think in this manner because it is not my responsibility to safeguard your letters in any specific way.”

Based on the above wisdoms, Hadrat Wālā writes his replies on the original letter of the seeker. But if the person writes his own reply on Hadrat Wālā’s replies and then sends it back to him, Hadrat Wālā emphatically prohibits this. There are two reasons for this: (1) It could cause confusion. (2) It is ill-mannered to write a reply on the written words of one’s senior. Hadrat Wālā writes to such a person: “When you consider a person to be your senior – even though he is not – it is ill-mannered to write a reply over his writing.”

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to teaching people to show respect to him: “The reason for this is not that I consider myself to be worthy of respect or that I want people to show respect to me. Allāh forbid. What am I that I have a right to respect?! The reason for my disapproval of this absence of respect is that when a person believes that a particular person is respectable and honourable, why does he not fulfil the rights of what he believes? Why does he treat him in a manner which contradicts his belief? If it were not for this reason, I find myself most ashamed to teach people on how to interact with others, but what can I do, I have to tell them with a view to rectify them.”

A few matters which cause distress

When certain matters are not taken into consideration, they cause extreme distress to Hadrat Wālā. A few examples will be given here and we will then terminate this section. Those who write letters must pay special attention to these points.

Sending a stamp instead of a self-addressed and stamped envelop

Instead of merely sending a stamp [to cover the postage], those who write to Hadrat Wālā must send an envelop or post card which contains the person's full name and address in clear legible words. The stamp must also be pasted by the person. If it is a hand-made envelop, three sides must be sealed. In fact, it would be better to apply glue to the fourth side and left to dry so that when Hadrat Wālā replies, all he has to do is write his reply, place it inside the envelop and seal it. If this is not done, those who are present here can see the acute discomfort and distress which it causes to Hadrat Wālā. The reason for this is that if a stamp is merely placed in the envelop, then although great care is taken to open the envelop, the stamp falls off quite often. Sometimes, Hadrat Wālā keeps the stamps aside with a view to sticking them later on, but because of the many letters which he receives and his various other occupations, he forgets where he placed those stamps.

In any case, searching for the stamps causes a lot of distress and a lot of time is wasted. Sometimes when Hadrat Wālā sees a fallen stamp, he has to open all the letters to check from which one it fell off. If he is unable to identify which letter if fell off from, then as per his practice, he will keep it in safe custody for one month. If he still does not identify whose stamp it is, he gives it away in charity. Sometimes, he finds two letters without a stamp, and since he does not know to which envelop the stamp which he found belongs, he sticks the stamp to one of the envelops and sticks another one to the other envelop at his cost. Another harm of not sticking the stamps on the envelopes from before hand is that sometimes the stamps do not have enough glue, and so, they do not stick properly. Consequently, it happens quite often that the stamp falls off after Hadrat Wālā sticks it. The stamp is then found separated, and Hadrat Wālā has to search through the entire stack to check from which envelope it fell off.

However, there is an advantage of not sticking the stamp by one's self and leaving it to Hadrat Wālā. The advantage of it is that the stamp can be stuck on the side where the envelope is sealed. In this way, the envelope remains intact and does not open in the post. Another way of doing this is for half the stamp to be stuck on the side where the envelope is to be sealed while the other half is left sticking out. In this way, the

stamp will not fall off and it will also be easy for Hadrat Wālā to seal the envelope. Just this week a person sent a hand-made envelope with all the sides open and none of them having any glue. Neither was the stamp pasted. In order to serve as a reprimand, Hadrat Wālā left the sides open as they had been, but tied a small length of cotton to prevent the letter from falling out. To sum up, Hadrat Wālā is very discomforted by all these shortcomings and failings.

When a self-addressed envelope is not sent

In the same way, Hadrat Wālā is severely disturbed when a self-addressed envelope is not sent. He considers it essential for the writer to personally write his address on the return envelope so that there is no possibility of error or in copying the address. If the address was written incorrectly or illegibly by the writer himself, he will be at fault if the letter does not reach him. It will not cause any grief to Hadrat Wālā. Some time back, a letter was returned to Hadrat Wālā because it was incorrectly addressed. He said: "Look at how much sorrow it would have caused me had it been written by myself."

Based on these reasons, if Hadrat Wālā receives a letter without a self-addressed envelope in it, he places the letter of the writer in such a manner that his address which is normally written at the head of the letter is visible from the envelope. He then sticks this protruding portion from the outside along the edge of the envelope. In this way, the letter will not move about and the person's address will be visible. If there is a possibility of it not sticking properly because of a lack of space and the letter separating from its envelope along the way, or the possibility of the letter getting torn when trying to remove it from the envelope, Hadrat Wālā stitches the address with a fine string. He then places the letter into the envelope, and the surrounding writing which is visible after sticking or stitching the address is scratched off. In this way, only the address is visible and the postman will be able to read it easily. If a person only sends a stamp without a self-addressed envelope, Hadrat Wālā places the letter as described above, pastes the stamp on the letter itself and posts it.

From all the above, the reader must have realized the extent of importance Hadrat Wālā attached to the fulfilment of his principles. Neither must the people of the postal system be inconvenienced, there must be no possibility of the letter

getting lost, nor should the recipient of the letter be inconvenienced in any way. This, despite the fact that the original sender – due to his failings – was not even deserving of such concessions.

A lot of Hadrat Wālā's time is taken away in seeing to all these matters and he has to bear a lot of inconvenience. Although he does not like to waste a single minute of his and can never tolerate wasting his time in unnecessary matters, he does all this with absolute calmness bearing a lot of fatigue because of a need to do it and the wisdom behind doing it. Those who are seated nearby and observe him become agitated, however, since Hadrat Wālā's blessed temperament – by the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* – is very principled, the severest of discomforts and fatigue do not vex him where there is a real need. But where there is no need, he cannot tolerate the slightest fatigue.

A practical disciplining of those who disobey

The following incident occurred just this week. Hadrat Wālā was cutting and trimming an envelope as described previously when – coincidentally – the principle of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband was present. On observing Hadrat Wālā's entire procedure, he said: "This entire procedure is far more time consuming than writing the address yourself." Hadrat Wālā replied: "There is wisdom behind this. I do it so that the person who sent the letter will at least realize how much inconvenience he put me through because of his action, he will not do this in future, and it will serve as a practical disciplining forever."

In addition to this practical disciplining, Hadrat Wālā explicitly writes on the envelope: "Had you sent a self-addressed envelope, I would not have to bear this inconvenience." As a way of reprimand, he would return some people's letters without even writing a reply. He writes: "The time which it would have taken me to reply to your letter was spent in pasting your address and writing a warning note to you. I now have other letters to reply to. This is why I am sending your letter without replying to it." In this way, it serves as a life-long lesson for the writer, and he will never repeat such an action.

When an envelope is too narrow

Some people seal the envelopes in such a manner that it becomes extremely difficult to open it. Sometimes, the letter inside gets torn. Similarly, some writers make very narrow

envelopes or fold the letter in such a way that there is no place to open the envelope at the top. Apart from time getting wasted, there are times when the letter gets torn.

When a stamp is doubtful

Those who send a stamp to be used for the reply envelope must ensure that it is absolutely clear, not dirty, marked, torn or in any other doubtful form. Hadrat Wālā refrains totally from pasting such stamps out of fear that it may cause some problems with the postal service. Many people had to face warrants of arrest from the postal service for involving themselves in such activities.

Hadrat Wālā considers any activity which would taint his honour or cause him any harm to be unwise, in fact, he considers it against the Sharīʿah. Unless, off course, there is a Sharʿī need to do it. This is why he never pastes doubtful stamps. In fact, if he finds used stamps which have not been stamped by the post office or the stamp is very light, he tears it immediately so that no person may look in the refuse and reuse such a stamp.

Letters written with coloured pens

Hadrat Wālā also disapproves of letters written with coloured pens although there is leeway for using them according to some scholars. However, since there is the possibility of spirits being used in the manufacture of powder, he exercises caution. Sometimes, we noticed him having a letter in his waistcoat pocket which is written with a coloured pen. He then recalled it while in his salāh. Hadrat Wālā will remove it from his pocket while in his salāh and throw it away. However, because there is difference of opinion on its permissibility, he would not repeat his salāh. Sometimes, his wet hands touch the writing and he has to now wash his hands. Occasionally, the ink does not come off even after washing it. If the ink falls on his clothing, the clothing too is spoilt. In short, since Hadrat Wālā is inconvenienced by letters written with coloured pens, it would be better if the seekers exercise caution in this regard.

Ink which is very light in colour

If a person does not have a black pen at hand, he may write with a pencil. However, he must apply some pressure when writing so that the writing is not illegible – where Hadrat Wālā

cannot read or is difficult to read. In addition to this, the person must be very careful about writing in very clear letters. He must write with a dark ink so that it is clearly visible. The sentences too must be clear so that whatever he intends saying is understood immediately. Hadrat Wālā does not waste his time reading letters which are not legible or whose meanings are not easily understood. This is because he does not have the time. He merely writes a warning and sends the letter back. If he were to waste his time reading such letters, all his other tasks and duties will fall behind. He replies to such letters as follows: "I find it very difficult to read letters where the writing is illegible. I am therefore sending it back without replying to it." Similarly, he writes to those who send very long letters: "A letter should not be longer than half a page or more than 10-12 lines because I do not have so much of time on my hands."

Advice with regard to worldly matters

Hadrat Wālā should not be consulted on worldly matters nor should any other request be made. This is because he neither has any interest in such matters nor any experience. Consequently, this is why he generally excuses himself from them. Even if he does give advice in special cases, he by and large writes: "If I was in your place, this is what I would do…"

Another reason why Hadrat Wālā abstains from giving advice is that people nowadays do not even understand the meaning of advice. They consider the advisor to be responsible for any harm or benefit which comes in the case where his advice is adhered to. Hadrat Wālā says: "Seeking advice is merely to get assistance from others so that it becomes easy for a person to come to a decision."

Hadrat Wālā says: "Nowadays, the harm of giving advice is that because people have gone beyond the limits in their beliefs with regard to the shaykh, they have this incorrect belief that a harmful or wrong view can never come into the shaykh's heart. They consider it to be certainly good, and feel that if they act against his advice, they will certainly experience harm. All this stems from excesses in one's beliefs, and it is essential to rectify people in this regard."

Ta'wīdh

Hadrat Wālā severely dislikes matters related to taʿwīdh and similar practices. The first reason for his dislike is that it

causes the masses and worldly people to come in crowds. This results in Dīnī harm and there is a strong possibility of wasting time. The second reason is that people have exceeded the limits in their beliefs in this regard and have elevated the status of taʿwīdh beyond what it actually is. Consequently, they do not consider duʿā' to be as effective nor those procedures which have been laid down for this purpose. If the taʿwīdh proves to be effective, they consider it a sign of piety. Hadrat Wālā constantly rectifies the beliefs of people in his speeches, writings and practices. He considers the effects of ʿamalīyyāt to be by and large the results of mental powers. Hadrat Wālā wrote detailed treatises on this subject. Malfūz No. 135 of *Husn al-ʿAzīz* volume one contains a discussion on the effects of mesmerism and mental powers. It is worth reading it.

In short, Hadrat Wālā severely dislikes the occupation of writing taʿwīdh. However, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had instructed him that if people come to him for taʿwīdh, he must write whatever comes to his mind. Hadrat Wālā therefore, in carrying out his shaykh's instruction, gives taʿwīdh for minor things like headaches, fever, effects of the evil eye and so on. In doing this, he neither follows the restrictions imposed by ʿāmils nor their specific procedures. Instead, in most cases he writes a Qur'ānic verse, Hadīth or duʿā' which comes to his mind at the time, and gives it to the person. By and large, Allāh *taʿālā* enables the purpose to be fulfilled. Just recently my son opened a shop and requested Hadrat Wālā for a taʿwīdh for blessings and also requested his prayers. Through its blessings and the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the shop is much busier than what was expected from a new shop. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Rectifying the excesses of people

When my son requested Hadrat Wālā, he advised him to read the following for expansion in sustenance: Seventy two times *Yā Bāsitu* after the fard salāhs. After some time, my son asked him for something else which he could read. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "When one type of medicine is not effective, another proves to be effective. But this is not the case with prayers. The first is sufficient. Continue with it and Allāh *taʿālā* will accept your prayers when He wills. A person related his misgivings and anxieties to Hadrat Wālā and requested him to teach him something which he could read. He replied: "One does not read anything to remove anxieties, one has to resort to plans and

procedures." The man said: "Okay, teach me a plan and procedure." He replied: "Each anxiety is removed by a separate plan. When you experience a specific anxiety, you must ask me about it."

After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "People are committing these wrongs even though they are educated and intelligent people."

Based on the fact that Hadrat Wālā is a Mujaddid and a reformer, he continually rectifies people with regard to the excesses which they commit when it comes to taʿwīdh and ʿamalīyyāt. As regards taʿwīdh for evil spirits, sorcery and so on, Hadrat Wālā refuses by saying that he is not an ʿāmil. However, out of his kindness to them, he says: "If anyone asks me to direct them to an ʿāmil, I will tell them." Consequently, if he is asked, he informs the people. If anyone still insists on a taʿwīdh from Hadrat Wālā despite his refusal and despite saying to the person that he is not an ʿāmil, Hadrat Wālā gives a taʿwīdh on condition that if it is not effective, he must not be requested again. He gives the reason for this precondition: "Because I am not an ʿāmil in the sense that if one taʿwīdh does not help, I must write another one."

Ta'wīdh for impermissible actions

Bearing in mind that Hadrat Wālā has no interest whatsoever in the writing of taʿwīdh and other related procedures, he says: "I do not find the writing of two pages of an article as burdensome as writing two lines of a taʿwīdh." Furthermore, Hadrat Wālā never writes taʿwīdh for impermissible actions. In fact, he refuses even where there is a possibility of some evil. On one occasion a person took a taʿwīdh so that a certain woman would agree to marry him. When the woman showed some interest in the man who took the taʿwīdh, he began having illicit relations with her without entering into a marriage with her. The very same person came to Hadrat Wālā and informed him that the taʿwīdh will probably not work now, he must give another taʿwīdh. After this incident, Hadrat Wālā completely stopped giving taʿwīdh for such reasons. Similarly, another person wrote to Hadrat Wālā asking for a taʿwīdh to separate a couple. He informed Hadrat Wālā that a man who is of Fārūqī lineage is going against the wishes and norm of his entire family and intends marrying a girl of Taymūrī lineage. And her entire family except for her mother is also against this

marriage. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "Separation is permissible only where coming together is unlawful. Is it unlawful to marry a woman that you now have to make plans to cause ill-feeling between the two? I will write a taʿwīdh if you can convince me in this regard."

More than one ta'wīdh

Because he does not have the time, and in order to put an end to the many requests, Hadrat Wālā does not send more than one taʿwīdh in a letter. Neither does he give more than one in response to verbal requests. He abstains from responding to verbal requests for taʿwīdh on Fridays because many people from the surrounding areas come to perform the jumuʿah salāh. If he were to permit this on Fridays as well, people will think to themselves that since they are there, they should ask for a taʿwīdh as well. In this way, many people will request taʿwīdh whether they need it or not. As for on other days, only the person who has a real need will come to Thānah Bhawan for a taʿwīdh.

In short, every practice of Hadrat Wālā is based on absolutely correct principles, on need and wisdom, and laid down after many experiences. The essence of all his principles is that neither must he be inconvenienced nor must a genuine need of a person be left unfulfilled.

The wrongs of those who ask for ta'wīdh

Those who make verbal requests for taʿwīdh commit many excesses, causing intense discomfort to Hadrat Wālā. Most of them merely say: "Give me a taʿwīdh." They do not say for what they need a taʿwīdh. Others will merely describe their condition without specifying whether they want a taʿwīdh, Hadrat Wālā to pray for them or his advice. Yet others will describe their condition but not how it came about – whether it is because of an ailment, evil spirits, the evil eye, or some other similar reason – and for which of these reasons they want a taʿwīdh. Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "After hearing the condition, it is not my job to diagnose the cause. That is the job of a doctor. A doctor listens to the condition as described by the patient and then makes a diagnosis. But I am not a doctor. How can I fathom the cause and for what reason must I write the taʿwīdh? Instead of providing me with details about their condition, all they have to do is tell what they want a taʿwīdh for."

Most people provide incomplete information and then they expect the person to ask them further questions in order to complete their incomplete information. This is in no way the responsibility of the person. Hadrat Wālā is most fastidious about not placing a burden on anyone for which the person is not responsible. This is why he too cannot tolerate anyone placing a burden on him for which he is not responsible. Therefore, in the above instances, as long as the person does not provide the full information clearly and does not present a principled request, Hadrat Wālā refuses to give a taʿwīdh. He says in this regard: "Can you ever provide half information when purchasing a train ticket, some goods or presenting a request to a ruler? The reason for providing half information [to me and people like me] is a lackadaisical attitude and no respect for the ʿulamā'."

Disciplining those who provide incomplete information

Hadrat Wālā says to such people: "You will only receive a taʿwīdh if you provide me with full information." If a person understands this warning and gives the full information, Hadrat Wālā still does not accede to his request immediately. He says to him: "You must come back after half an hour, and if you make a request in a dignified manner, I will give you a taʿwīdh. At present, you discomforted me and hurt my heart. Even if I were to write a taʿwīdh now, it will not be effective because my heart is not open towards you." The wisdom behind this is that since the person has been disciplined practically, he will never offend anyone for the rest of his life.

If Hadrat Wālā asks the person if he has provided all the information, and he does not know what he left out and what shortcoming he displayed, Hadrat Wālā says to him: "Go outside and learn how to provide full information and how to make a dignified request." When the person learns the proper etiquette and provides the full information, he still says to the person: "You must return after half an hour, give me the full information and I will give you a taʿwīdh." When the person returns with the full information, Hadrat Wālā gives him a taʿwīdh immediately.

The purpose behind disciplining a person in this way is so that it serves as a good lesson for the future. If anyone persists in asking verbally and displays shortcomings despite explaining to him, Hadrat Wālā advises him to put his request in writing.

If he commits any offensive act in presenting a written request, Hadrat Wālā asks him to present his request via the post. He cannot bear for any person's work to be left unfinished. Therefore, he lays down principles and rules. However, if a person is not prepared to get his work accomplished through these principles and rules, then he himself is responsible and not Hadrat Wālā.

Those who seek permission for Hizb al-Bahr

If a seeker asks Hadrat Wālā for permission to read Hizb al-Bahr, Dalā'il al-Khayrāt or other similar collections, he first asks the person: "What is the purpose of asking permission?" If the person replies that he would like to make it a practice for the realization of worldly needs, Hadrat Wālā replies: "I am not an ʿāmil." Some of them give the following reason for their request: "My purpose is to use it as a means to gain proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and obtain His pleasure." Hadrat Wālā replies to such "cleverness": "What, before these prayers were compiled, was there no other way of gaining proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*? How did the pious elders who compiled these books acquire proximity and how did they become so qualified to have these prayers inspired to them? It shows that there were other ways of acquiring proximity. So you too should follow the same way so that you too can become like them."

Such people are silenced and their incorrect beliefs are rectified. There were some who were already in the practice of reading a section of Dalā'il al-Khayrāt on a daily basis. Hadrat Wālā said to them: "Read one section and see how much time it takes you to complete it. Thereafter, spend the same amount of time daily to read a Durūd Sharīf which is reported authentically. This is superior."

Leaving no space to write

A person wrote a small note and sent it to Hadrat Wālā. He said to those who were present: "This man has surpassed even me in writing concisely." He then wrote to the person: "You have left no place for me to reply to you, I am therefore not writing any reply."

Hadrat Wālā wanted to draw his attention to the fact that when you have some work to be done, etiquette demands that you either include a page on which to write on, or leave a blank space on your letter.

Registered letters

If anyone sends a registered letter and Hadrat Wālā knows through external evidences that the letter is about some dispute, and that is why the sender wants to make certain that he receives it and he cannot deny receiving it, then he sends it back [without signing for it]. But if he does not have any suspicion of this nature, he accepts it. However, he dislikes receiving registered letters. He says: "A signature of acceptance is required where there is a possibility of the addressee denying having received it. This means that the sender feels that the addressee is probably a liar. And it is sinful to consider a Muslim to be a liar without proof from the Sharīʿah. Moreover, the sender's objective too is not fulfilled because he sent a registered letter so that the addressee cannot deny having read the special subject matter which it contains. However, the signature will only display the fact that the letter reached the person. It cannot prove that the actual subject matter reached the addressee. It is therefore a wasted effort to send registered letters. As for sending a registered letter to ensure it reaches safely, this can be accomplished by an ordinary registered letter [which merely shows that the letter reached the person]."

A reply to those who apologize for a late reply

If a seeker apologizes for not writing to Hadrat Wālā for a long time, Hadrat Wālā writes back the following in order to reassure him: "I do not wait expectantly for anyone's letter. There is no need to apologize. You can be rest assured."

On such occasions, Hadrat Wālā says to those who are present: "How is it going to harm me if anyone does not write to me? He will be harming his own self. What is the need to apologize to me?"

I [the compiler] say: Apologizing in this way is certainly unprincipled because it means that Hadrat Wālā is waiting expectantly for letters from the seekers, whereas they write to him for their own benefit. What is the need for Hadrat Wālā to await their letters?!

Unclear money orders

If a money order coupon does not contain any message or the message is unclear whereby it is not ascertained clearly as to how the money is to be spent, then Hadrat Wālā sends the

money order back and also writes his reason for sending it back. Even if the attached message states that a letter is to follow soon wherein details on how the money should be spent will be provided, Hadrat Wālā sends it back. The reason for this is that if the money was accepted and then the letter arrived containing information which – according to Hadrat Wālā – needs the money to be sent back, then apart from the inconvenience of keeping the money as a trust, it is a laborious process to send the money back and an additional cost. Previously, Hadrat Wālā used to accept the money order before the letter, but when this caused a lot of confusion, he laid down this rule of returning money orders of this nature.

Money sent by insured or registered post

Similarly if anyone sends money by insured or registered post, Hadrat Wālā send it back except in cases where he is fully convinced of where it has come from. His refusal to accept such money is based on the same above-mentioned reasons and difficulties. Some time back a large amount of money – if I recall correctly, it was about 500 rupees – was sent by insured post. Hadrat Wālā – as was his practice – sent it back. The person then sent a detailed letter about the money and sought permission to send it again. The money was from an estate and permission was not obtained from some of the heirs to spend it in good causes. Hadrat Wālā therefore prohibited the person from sending it. Later on, the person obtained permission and approval from all the inheritors and asked Hadrat Wālā for permission to send it to him. Hadrat Wālā granted his permission.

Had the money been accepted the first time, it could have caused many problems and a lot of confusion. Many incidents of this nature take place on a regular basis. Hadrat Wālā constantly draws the attention of those who are present and says to them: "Look! People think I am very suspicious. If I am suspicious, my suspicions prove correct most of the time. The fact of the matter is that I have laid down most of my principles after many experiences. If others were to experience similar incidents, they would become more suspicious than me."

When Hadrat Wālā's diagnoses, suspicions and possibilities prove correct – as happens most of the time – he says: "If Allāh *taʿālā* enables a physician to recognize the pulse of people and

diagnose their intricate and subtle illnesses merely by checking their pulse, will you also refer to him as a suspicious person?"

In most cases, Hadrat Wālā returns moneys which come through insured post or money orders because this is against his principles. When the same amounts come back according to his laid down principles – as happens most of the time – Hadrat Wālā says to those who are present: "Look! When something is bound to come, it will certainly come even if one were to send it back a thousand times. Why, then, should we spoil our intentions and act against our principles!?"

An ailing person sends money

I think it would be appropriate to relate a few more incidents related to Hadrat Wālā's precautions as they would also serve as lessons. Since it is obligatory to exercise these precautions and all scholars unanimously agree on the obligation of the fine juridical points which Hadrat Wālā adheres to, no one has the nerve to object. Nowadays, people do not even think of practising on these fine points. Just recently a person sent a considerable amount of money to Hadrat Wālā to be spent in charitable causes. The person added: "I am extremely ill and have no hope of recovering."

Hadrat Wālā pays special attention to upholding of rights and always bears in mind the injunctions of the Sharīʿah and minute intricate juridical issues. The man's letter did not contain any reference to a bequest, so Hadrat Wālā wrote a document on a Sharʿī bequest, sent it to the man and asked him to sign it and send it back to him. In this way, the bequest will be valid according to the Sharīʿah. Hadrat Wālā also thought to himself that if the signed bequest comes back to him, well and good; if not, the money will be sent back. However, since the man had sent the money with the intention of a bequest, he signed the document without hesitation and sent it back to Hadrat Wālā. Had he not done this, Hadrat Wālā would have sent the money back. In fact, had Hadrat Wālā not known that the amount is far less than one third of his estate – making such a bequest even when a person has lost hope in life is permissible – he would have returned it immediately.

A bequest made by a devoted attendant and khalīfah

Janāb Hājī Muhammad Yūsuf Sāhib Rangūnī *rahimahullāh* was a very sincere, devoted and wealthy attendant and khalīfah

of Hadrat Wālā. When he passed away, his mature heirs sent a large amount of money which the deceased had written as a bequest in Hadrat Wālā's name. However, Hadrat Wālā wrote back and said: "Since the deceased has some immature heirs, the bequest can only be accepted if it is proven by some proof of the Sharīʿah. If not, it cannot be accepted. A Sharʿī proof should therefore be presented to the ʿulamā' of that place. Those ʿulamā' must also be informed of all those who were present when the bequest was written, or in whose presence Hājī Sāhib agreed for the bequest to be written. They must also be informed as to who and where the bequest was kept. A formal fatwā must be obtained from them and it must be sent to me. If I consider it to be a Sharʿī proof, I will happily accept the bequest; if not, I will excuse myself from it. Subsequently, a complete and formal fatwā together with Sharʿī proofs was sent. Hadrat Wālā was fully satisfied and he accepted the amount happily.

Similarly, after the same Hājī Sāhib passed away, Hadrat Wālā returned a large amount of money which had been placed as a trust with Hadrat Wālā to be spent for a specific charitable work. Hadrat Wālā did not wait to inform the heirs first [before sending the money back] because they – out of respect – may ask him not to send it back irrespective of whether it was wise or unwise to do that. On the other hand, after they received the money, there were at total ease to decide what to do. The mature heirs decided to send the money back to Hadrat Wālā and they gave to their immature siblings an equal amount from their side. They requested Hadrat Wālā to use it for the same purpose as previously. Hadrat Wālā accepted without hesitation because now there was no Sharʿī prohibition. He spent the money in the designated charitable work.

The matter concerning the houses of Hakīm Nūr Ahmad

Janāb Hakīm Nūr Ahmad Sāhib Kānpūrī *rahimahullāh* was from among Hadrat Wālā's khulafā'. When he was on his death bed, he handed over three houses to Hadrat Wālā through a written bequest. Despite the difficulties of weakness and illness, he went to the court and had his bequest registered. However, because he was in Kānpūr and Hadrat Wālā was in Thānah Bhawan, the distance and short time did not permit him to inform Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā was therefore ignorant of this entire arrangement. Coincidentally, Hadrat

Wālā journeyed to Kānpūr and was informed of the matter. Bearing in mind that this was a matter concerning rights of fellow humans, Hadrat Wālā made a thorough investigation to find out the Hakīm Sāhib's heirs but learnt that he did not leave behind any heirs. However, he heard that he has a relative who is gone missing. After reflecting over all the Hakīm Sāhib's arrangements, Hadrat Wālā concluded that had he had the time, he would have given his estate for charitable purposes because he had no heirs. However, since he did not find any reliable person, he felt he should write the bequest in favour of Hadrat Wālā. He made this bequest trusting Hadrat Wālā to spend the income from his houses for charitable works. Hadrat Wālā came to this conclusion after pondering over the Hakīm Sāhib's temperament.

Thus, instead of keeping the three houses for himself, Hadrat Wālā – based on his extreme caution – gave them as a bequest to an orphanage in Kānpūr after laying down certain conditions. He also had the deed of bequest registered. Furthermore, Hadrat Wālā published an announcement with reference to this bequest so that none of his own heirs may make any claims. Since the deceased had a missing relative, Hadrat Wālā also preserved his rights. Furthermore, if other heirs are established later on, their rights will also be upheld. Hadrat Wālā did this by making reference to this in the deed of bequest. Hadrat Wālā took an additional precaution by making an announcement in *Tanbīhāt Wasīyyat* (a document regarding his own bequests). It is quoted here verbatim.

Article four related to houses and properties

I had made mention of the houses of Hakīm Nūr Ahmad which I set aside as an endowment for the orphanage in Kānpūr with certain conditions. The most important of these conditions which is laid down with a view to safeguarding the rights of fellow humans and which needs to be announced is that I could not ascertain any legal heir of the deceased. If this is really the case [that he has no heir], then all the houses in their entirety are endowed to the orphanage. If a legal heir is established through proofs of the Sharīʿah and he considers this endowment to be lawful (it is essential for the prerequisites to be found in order to consider it lawful according to the Sharīʿah) then all the houses are still endowed. If he does not consider it lawful or it cannot be considered lawful due to some

reason, then one third of the houses are endowed and the heir can exercise his right over two thirds. Furthermore, from now until the time he receives his rightful share, whatever income was derived from the endowment must be calculated and two thirds must be returned to him. If the said endowment does not have that amount at the time, the two thirds income must first be filled by the remaining one third, and the expenses for the orphanage may be paid for thereafter.

As a precaution, the full details of the Kānpūr court – where the endowment is registered – are noted here so that it will be easy for the rightful person to copy them when the time comes. (the date and file number are then mentioned).

We can see from the above how Hadrat Wālā took consideration of all the Sharʿī aspects and compiled the deed of endowment. All the registrars who saw it were most impressed by it and said: "We have not come across such a clear deed of endowment which covers all angles." This, despite the fact that Hadrat Wālā was neither a lawyer nor one conversant with the law.

A sender passes away before an amount could reach Hadrat Wālā

If Hadrat Wālā learns that a certain person sent money to him but the man passed away before the amount could reach Hadrat Wālā, he would return it because mere sending of an item to a person does not make the person its owner. Rather, he has to take possession of it. In this case, since the sender passed away before Hadrat Wālā could receive it, Hadrat Wālā has not taken legal possession of it as yet. Hadrat Wālā is therefore not the owner of that amount. The heirs of the sender are its owners. If Hadrat Wālā hears of a sender passing away before he [Hadrat Wālā] can receive the money order, then Hadrat Wālā does not even accept the money order; he sends it back.

Similarly, if Hadrat Wālā hears of a sender passing away while Hadrat Wālā is using the sent amount, Hadrat Wālā stops spending it immediately. He then informs the heirs of the specific places and avenues in which the money is being sent, and asks them if he must continue. If he receives satisfactory replies from all sides, he continues using it. If not, he sends the remaining amount back. Where there was no specification for

its spending, he sends the amount back without asking for any directives from the heirs.

Rules related to khatam contributions

Similar precautions are also made with regard to khatam contributions. Before explaining the precautions, I feel it necessary to explain khatam contributions so that its purpose may be understood.

The reality of a khatam contribution is that since some time – under the suggestion of Hadrat Wālā – the Khatm-e-Khwājgān is read daily after the ʿasr salāh. This is done for general welfare works and to assist those of the residents of the Khānqāh who are needy. Based on certain appropriate prerequisites, the poor residents of the Khānqāh join in this Khatm. Those who request duʿā's for any of their lawful worldly reasons make a payment of one anna per day. On the completion of the Khatm, each of the person's who made the payment are mentioned by name and duʿā' is made according to the request which they made. Since it is permissible to accept payment for ʿamalīyyāt and ruqyah, the received amounts are distributed among those who took part in the Khatm. If anyone would like duʿā' to be made for him without payment of this amount, it is made for free for him for seven days.

Hadrat Wālā's precautions with regard to these received amounts are now explained.

1. No payment is accepted from a person requesting duʿā' solely for Dīnī reasons. This is because such a duʿā' is part of Dīn, and apart from certain instances as outlined in the books of jurisprudence, it is not permissible to accept payment for Dīn.

2. If a sick person sent money to make duʿā' for his recovery, and he passes away before the sent amount is spent in full, distributing his remaining money is stopped immediately. The remaining amount is sent back.

Some heirs requested that duʿā' of forgiveness should be made for the deceased in lieu for the remaining amount, but Hadrat Wālā refused saying that it was not permissible to accept any payment for duʿā' of forgiveness.

3. If a wealthy person wishes to send more than one anna per day, it is not accepted. On one occasion, a governor and on

another occasion a prince wanted to send more than the stipulated amount. Hadrat Wālā refused. Only one anna per day was accepted. However, after the governor succeeded in achieving his goal [for which he had sent the money], he sought permission to send 150 rupees to feed and clothe the poor. He was given permission. He sent the money and it was used as requested.

A question must be clear

"A question must be concise and its meaning clear. Some people write questions in a manner which can never be understood by a person who does not know about the matter in question. The reader now has to read different parts of the question several times."

Hand delivered letters

"I do not value hand delivered letters too much. I feel that there is no need to reply to it because if the person needed a reply, he would have spent his money and sent it by post."

Dislike for new types of expressions

"I abhor the new types of expressions which are in vogue nowadays. The tones of the expressions are strange, and incorrect and false things are presented as if they are truths and facts. These must have been innovated by a very conspiring and scheming person."

In short, there are thousands of precautions which Hadrat Wālā exercises in his day to day life. The extreme importance which he attaches to upholding of rights and clarity in transactions is – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – well known and acknowledged by both friend and foe. Those who observe him exercising these precautions always acquire practical lessons which are far more effective than countless speeches and writings. I now conclude this third point and commence the next one.

Principles Related to Visitors

A form for newcomers

New comers who [generally] cannot even provide clear answers to simple questions are given a form which they must fill. In this way, they can write the answers to all the questions at ease. If a person cannot write, he can dictate the answers to

someone. The form is then returned to Hadrat Wālā. In this way, both parties will be saved from problems and confusion. The form is as follows:

Initial questions to newcomers to the Khānqāh

Some people come to me for the fulfilment of certain objectives. Their fulfilment is dependent on learning details about them. However, when I pose questions to them, most of them cannot answer, give incomplete answers or can only answer after posing the same questions several times to them. This naturally vexes me. When a person is agitated, it becomes difficult to fulfil another's objectives. Upon enquiry, most of them say that they get confused when I pose verbal questions to them. In order to make matters easy, the following form is presented to them. They must fill in the black spaces by themselves or get someone to help them. The form must then be handed to me. In this way, both parties will experience comfort.

1. Name
2. Hometown
3. Where have you come from at present and how long were you there?
4. Occupation
5. Have you inherited any land?
6. What is your level of knowledge in Urdu, Arabic or English
7. What is your actual purpose in coming here? Have you come merely to meet me, or do you have something to say, to write and give to me, or speak to me verbally?

8. Would you like to speak to me in privacy or in the presence of others?
9. If you already pledged bayʿah to me, when was this? What do you want to learn?
10. Which of my lectures and writings have you read?
11. If you have corresponded with me in the past and you have all the correspondence with you, I would like to see it.
12. How long will you be staying for?
13. Where will you be staying?
14. Is this the first time you came to the Khānqāh or did you come before? If you came before, how long did you spend here?
15. Are you aware of the food arrangements here?
16. Did you see the large hand-written announcement outside?

Signed: Ashraf ʿAlī

Time table

In order to make things easy for new comers and also to put an end to disturbances to his time, Hadrat Wālā pasted a time-table outside the area where he receives visitors. Consideration was given to others to be able to converse with him and sit in his company, while at the same time, not causing any disturbance to his time. This announcement is quoted below:

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent the Merciful

Announcement

This announcement is made so that neither do people who need to meet me are inconvenienced nor am I.

1. From morning until noon I am occupied with various tasks which can only be accomplished in solitude. Meeting anyone or speaking to them during this time is both disturbing and inconvenient.

2. However, three people are excluded from the above. (1) A person who has just arrived and wants to merely meet me and shake hands with me. (2) A person who is leaving and wants to bid farewell. (3) A person who has a need which cannot be deferred. For example, he has come to take a taʿwīdh for labour pains or needs to ask a ruling which cannot be delayed. However, the moment each of these three persons enter, they must inform me of the reason which has brought them here so that not knowing the reason does not cause any worry.

3. From noon until I complete the zuhr salāh, and for as long as I remain in my assembly is my time for a siesta and salāh. I require to be excused from all meetings and any other services during this time.

4. Once I return to my assembly after the zuhr salāh and until the adhān for the ʿasr salāh, I give open permission for anyone to come in, sit down, converse on any topic, ask for taʿwīdh, etc. However, no taʿwīdh will be given on Fridays.

5. The same rule as number three will apply from the adhān of ʿasr salāh until the end of ʿasr salāh.

6. Rule number one will apply from after the ʿasr salāh until after the ʿishā salāh. The same people who are mentioned in rule number two are excluded here as well.

7. I am obviously excused from all engagements after the ʿishā salāh unless there is an extremely severe need.

8. The above rules apply to those who are able to express their objectives and needs in the presence of others. If anyone wants to speak to me in private then if he feels that a written note would suffice, he must place his note in the box which is placed outside my assembly area. He must include his full address stating where he requires the answer. For example, in such and such room number or on the pulpit of the musjid. These notes are always removed from the box after the fajr salāh. In this way, the person will receive a written reply.

A person wanting to speak to me in privacy must inquire about a suitable time. He must do this through the same procedure [of placing a note in the box]. He can then come and speak to me at whatever time I stipulate. I normally set aside the time after maghrib salāh for this.

9. There are some guests to whom I give special permission to sit with me in privacy. Others should not use this as a basis for their own selves. Similarly, if I permit a certain person to attend to some of my needs, e.g. fanning me, then others should not follow suite unless they receive special permission from me. In the same way, no one must try to serve me in any way without express permission, e.g. carrying my shoes, filling my water can and keeping it ready for me, and so on.

10. When I am walking on the road, no one must accompany me. Nor should anyone call for me from his house.

Note: The above rules only apply to those who come here solely out of the faith and confidence which they have in me. These rules do not apply to a person having any other relationship with me. However, if I restrict a person to a particular rule, it is incumbent on him to adhere to it.

Note: If I make any changes to the above, one will have to act on the changes. Separate rules are applicable to personal employees. These have been explained verbally to them.

A few changes are made to the above time table in the month of Ramadān. Hadrat Wālā writes them personally with his blessed pen and displays it on the last day of Shaʿbān. It is quoted below:

Two important announcements

(these are the same as those which were made last Ramadān)

1. Time is limited and there are many things to do. The morning assembly is therefore suspended until the end of Ramadān. Permission is granted for one or two minutes of essential verbal conversation.

2. Those who are not permitted any correspondence during their stay here must not write any type of note. Those who are permitted must not place any note in the letter-box which is outside my assembly area. Instead, they must send it by post. The reply will be given as follows: They must go to Hāfiz I'jāz after the 'asr salāh. He will have a box from which he will call out names of those who had written notes to me. He will then return the notes in this way. It would be better to wait for the reply one day after having posted the note. There are those rare occasions when the reply is given on the third day. That is all.

Written by Ashraf 'Alī – 1 Ramadān al-Mubārak 1354 A.H.

Balance in practising on principles and rules

I have personally seen some special associates who were residing in the Khānqāh giving their letters directly in Hadrat Wālā's hands instead of placing them in the letter box. This demonstrates Hadrat Wālā's perfect balance. Those who adhere strictly to principles inevitably find their strict adherence leading them to "dryness" and they have no concept whatsoever of exceptions to the rule. While adherence to principles is one of the demands of a sound temperament, it [sound temperament] also demands exceptions in certain special cases and on occasions of need.

Therefore, none of Hadrat Wālā's rules are without exceptions even if they are only applied at times of need because allowing too many exceptions demonstrates an element of being unprincipled. This is why we find Hadrat Wālā's exceptions also based on absolute principles. In other words, only in certain special situations, to the extent of need, and only those who are special associates, relatives, or hold a special level of honour and distinction, and people of severe needs are sometimes exempted from the rules.

Rules for those who seek permission to come to Hadrat Wālā

If a new seeker writes to Hadrat Wālā seeking permission to come to meet him, the first question he asks him is: "What purpose and objective of yours is there which makes its fulfilment dependent on coming here?" The seekers give various answers to this question. However, as long as they mention objectives which do not necessitate coming here, he continues finding fault with them and does not give them permission to come. This applies even if their purpose of coming is an objective in itself. For example, coming for the sake of rectification, duʿā's, obtaining a taʿwīdh and so on. However, if a person writes that his purpose of coming is solely to meet him and promises that in the course of his stay, he will neither address Hadrat Wālā nor write any note to him, and will merely remain silent in his assembly, then Hadrat Wālā gladly grants permission. He says in this regard: "This is one objective which can never be acquired without coming here. As for all other objectives, they can be realized without coming here." A person should therefore come here solely for this one purpose. The condition of neither addressing Hadrat Wālā nor writing any note to him will be explained further on.

In short, Hadrat Wālā only permits a person to come if he clearly and explicitly states that his sole purpose of wanting to come is to meet him, and also makes a promise that he will neither address Hadrat Wālā nor write any note to him. If a person does not agree to these conditions, he has the choice of not coming.

Those who come without permission

Hadrat Wālā says: "If anyone wishes to come after having obtained permission, then the condition is that he must not come without first establishing these rules and regulations [as mentioned above]. But if a person arrives here without asking for permission, I have no guards to stop him. Anyone can come when he likes. However, upon arrival, I will pose the same question to him [as quoted above] and lay down the same conditions for remaining here."

A reply to the unprincipled actions of those who come to the Khānqāh

When some of those who arrived without permission were posed with the above mentioned questions, they gave disjointed replies, uncouth answers, and made offensive statements. The

ill feeling reached such a level that they were either made to go back from where they had come on the very next train or they themselves departed. Wisdom itself also required this because when matters are not clear, to continue staying there would cause discomfort to both parties. The order to leave immediately is quite rare. Most of the newcomers who offend Hadrat Wālā ask him for pardon. Hadrat Wālā says to them: "You have asked for pardon and I have pardoned you. However, what about the offence which you caused me? Has it merely disappeared? The purpose for which you came here – i.e. to stay over – will only be fulfilled if you do something to make up for your offence." If the person asks as to how he can make up for it, then in most cases Hadrat Wālā asks the person to decide for himself. Previously, Hadrat Wālā used to specify how a person should make up for his offence, but he no longer does this so that he may not be wrongly accused of being too strict and harsh.

Once the person himself – or through the advice of others – makes up for his offences sufficiently and appropriately, Hadrat Wālā accepts it and even provides some concession from his side. But if the person's plan of making up is insufficient and inappropriate, Hadrat Wālā will continue pointing to its faults until the person comes to a correct plan of action or Hadrat Wālā himself shows him a way out. In most cases, the manner of making up for the offence comprises of the person going to a nearby relative and then sending a note requesting permission to come to Hadrat Wālā. For some people, all the person has to do is write down the offence which he committed and to place it on the notice board of the Khānqāh. For yet others, Hadrat Wālā instructed them to go to each person in the Khānqāh individually and express his mistake to him. This is stipulated so that it weighs heavily on the person and it serves as a warning for the future.

A shortcoming committed by a seeker

Just recently a person decided that he would make up for his mistake by going to Sahāranpūr and then seek permission to come to Thānah Bhawan. Consequently, he did this and permission was given to him. However, when he came back, he committed an offence which discomforted Hadrat Wālā. When he was asked the reason for it, he began providing incorrect explanations and reasons. Hadrat Wālā detests this severely

because it is against integrity and sincerity. Since it was a chronic ailment, it needed more severe ways of making up for it. So instead of instructing him to go to Sahāranpūr, Hadrat Wālā instructed him to go to Delhi. Hadrat Wālā then repeatedly said: "By Allāh, I am most perturbed. In fact, I am more perturbed than him, but what could I do? He could not have been rectified without instructing him to make up for his mistake in this way."

The man was a genuine seeker so he happily agreed to go to Delhi. On reaching there, he sent another request seeking permission to come to Thānah Bhawan and acknowledged his error. Hadrat Wālā gladly granted him permission. However, at the time of presenting his letter of permission to Hadrat Wālā, he first removed it from his pocket. Hadrat Wālā was about to accept it from him but he left it on the floor and extended his hands to shake hands with Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā was severely offended by this. Had he wanted to shake hands first, he should have done that and then he should have taken out the letter from his pocket. And if he took out the letter first, he should have given the letter and not shaken hands with him, or shaken hands after handing over the letter. Hadrat Wālā asked him to leave. On such occasions, Hadrat Wālā says to those who are present: "If I remain patient over such actions of these people, they would not be rectified and my heart would develop ill-feeling towards them. Now that I have expressed myself and some people make up for their offence, I am clear in my heart."

A person enters a special assembly without permission

On one occasion, a person entered Hadrat Wālā's special assembly and sat down. Hadrat Wālā said to him: "This is the time for my special assembly. You must come after zuhr. You must leave now." The man left.

Hadrat Wālā then addressed those who were present: "Look! Had I resorted to politeness and not told him anything, I would have felt severely constrained for as long as he remained seated. I would have developed ill-feeling towards him. Now that he departed silently and immediately after I told him, my heart has developed value and love for him. You can gauge which of the two situations is better."

Stories of past spiritual masters

I [the compiler] say with regard to the above mentioned forms of atonements: The spiritual masters of the past used to lay down even more stringent forms of atonements. In his *Tabaqāt*, Imām Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident of a certain shaykh. A seeker came to him and said: "I have come from a very distant place." Because this seeker said this to demonstrate his good action, the shaykh punished him by refusing him to come to him for the next three years. Similarly, the same book relates the story of a seeker who was residing with a shaykh. The seeker had spent 100 000 dirhams of his own, and another 100 000 dirhams which he took on loan. Despite this, he was not even given permission to speak to the shaykh. Many other stories of this nature are related in *Tabaqāt* which Hadrat Wālā relates to us and then says: "The seekers of today are no seekers. They cannot bear the slightest forms of atonements."

When Hadrat Wālā saw that those who are coming to the Khānqāh are breaking many of the conditions which were laid down, and that a lot of time is being wasted in laying down the conditions, he prepared a complete programme and had it printed at his own cost. It is quoted here:

Programme for those who intend establishing a bond

This programme is made up of seven steps:

1. During a seeker's initial visit here, he must neither speak to me nor write any note to me. He must remain absolutely silent, attend the assemblies and be in my company with a view to acquiring insight and affinity.

2. After leaving here, if he feels he wants to establish a bond, he must correspond with me from his place of residence. This correspondence is with a view to increasing affinity with me.

3. If he wants to return here with the sole purpose of corresponding with me, then before coming here he must write to me to establish whether there is agreement and affinity between us and obtain permission to correspond with me.

4. After obtaining my permission, it will be essential for him to present the letter of permission on his arrival. In the

course of his stay here, he will be permitted to only correspond with me, there will be no direct speaking.

5. After acquiring complete affinity – which can be acquired after a long period of correspondence – he may correspond with me and converse with me during the course of his stay here after having received permission [to correspond and converse with me].

All the above applies in the case where a bond is to be maintained.

6. If there is no hope for affinity due to differences in inclinations and temperaments, then for the sake of his advantage – and not because of any ill-feeling – I will advise him to separate himself from here, stay away from here and to revert to someone with whom he has affinity.

7. If even in this state he expresses the desire to write to me for du‛ā’ or to enquire about my well-being, I will permit him. He may even come here and sit in my company provided he is not offended by having to remain silent.

The above seven steps can be summed up as follows:

1. Merely attending an assembly.
2. Correspondence from his place of residence.
3. After acquiring the necessary affinity and obtaining permission to sit in my company, he may stay here and correspond with me but not converse with me.
4. After a lengthy period of correspondence, acquiring total affinity and obtaining permission to remain in my company, he may correspond with me and converse with me.

In the case where there is no affinity:

5. I will advise him to revert to someone with whom he has affinity.
6. Permission will be given to correspond solely to seek du‛ā’ and inquire about my well-being.
7. Provided he does not feel offended, he may be permitted to sit in my company without corresponding or conversing with me.

That is all.
Written by Ashraf ʿAlī

The benefit of printing the above programme

This programme makes it very easy for both parties. When any new seeker asks permission to come here, Hadrat Wālā presents this printed programme to him. If he seeks permission to come here with the condition of not corresponding and not conversing with Hadrat Wālā in the course of his stay, he is given permission. He is also instructed to present the letter of permission on his arrival. The newcomers present it the moment they arrive, and they are given permission to stay over without any hesitation. There are no problems after this provided the person does not do anything against Hadrat Wālā's principles.

The benefit of prohibiting newcomers from speaking and writing to Hadrat Wālā

Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "Allāh *taʿālā* Himself put this idea in my heart to make a condition to newcomers to abstain from speaking and writing. If not, the absence of affinity in temperament and ignorance about the path would have caused them to severely offend me through their unprincipled statements and disjointed questions. A lot of my time and their own time would have been wasted. All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that I can now continue with my work with absolute peace and people too have the opportunity of listening to what I say with concentration and to ponder and reflect over my talks. Had I permitted them to interject, it would not have been an assembly but a public meeting [where everyone says whatever comes to his mind]. They would have been confused, they would have vexed me and they would have left here completely empty. Now I receive many letters in which the seekers state that they experience a lot of benefit from remaining silent. The need to sit silently is supported from this Hadīth as well. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself requested one of his Companions to recite the Qur'ān to him. The Companion said: "I must recite it to you while it has been revealed to you!?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "I like to hear it recited by someone else."

Hadrat Wālā then said: "There is more reward in reciting the Qur'ān by oneself, while there is more enjoyment and more effect in listening to it being recited by others."

The reason behind rules and regulations

Hadrat Wālā also says: "All my practices with regard to those who come here are laid down to teach them etiquette. This is the fundamental, and everything else are subsidiaries which constantly change according to time, reason and needs. This fundamental is clearly supported by the Hadīth:

كأن على رؤوسهم الطير

As if birds were sitting on their [Companions'] heads.

Bearing in mind the clear benefits of this rule, even if it was not supported by the above Hadīth, there can be no objection to its desirability and applicability. Medical books have many tried and tested prescriptions and all are considered to be applicable although none of them are supported by Hadīth. But the fact that my practice is supported by Hadīth, it becomes stronger and its goodness increases."

The responsibility of those present at the time when speaking and writing is prohibited

Hadrat Wālā gives another advantage of the prohibition of speaking and writing in the course of one's stay in the Khānqāh. He says: "Newcomers must sit silently and observe my method of training, my habits, the peculiarities of my temperament and my talks. They must ponder over them with an open mind. When they leave here, they are free to come to a conclusion about me. If my training method and temperament do not appeal to them, and they do not expect developing an affinity with me, they may revert to someone else. If everything about me appeals to them, they can correspond with me for the sake of rectification. In the beginning, they must not come here with the specific intention of rectification. Instead, they must come here to learn and to see if there would be mutual affinity or not. If there would be, they must correspond with me for their rectification, and to learn the correct and beneficial way of presenting their spiritual ailments to me."

Those who observe silence realize their objective

I [the compiler] say: Those who present themselves before Hadrat Wālā are able to fulfil these two objectives very easily and in a most excellent manner. The reason for this is that Hadrat Wālā by nature does not have any airs, is informal,

simple, clear and free-loving. Hadrat Wālā clearly displays his creed, method of training, habits and peculiarities of his temperament – in short every part of his life – through his words, actions, statements and demeanour by night and day without the slightest fear of criticism from anyone. In fact, there are times when he practises on concessions of the Sharīʿah so that people could see and do not consider him to be more than the worshipper and ascetic which he is. For example, he will occasionally perform optional salāhs while sitting, engage in a lot of joking and laughing with children, give full vent to his anger when the occasion demands it, promptly reprimand people who came from very far off places for breaking his principles without bothering in the least if their faith in him is broken. Hadrat Wālā explains another objective for his approach: "Whatever whisperings a person is to experience about me for the rest of his life and whatever objections he is to have against me must all come to him at once and be put to an end at once. After this, he will either remain faithful to me for the rest of his life or lose confidence in me for the rest of his life. In this way, he will be firm on either of the two options. If I were to make myself up, the person will not have a single opinion about me for the rest of his life. When he sees me doing something different from what he thought about me, he will think to himself: Look, one point has been exposed. When he sees another point, he will say: Look, another point has been exposed. In short, he will not be satisfied for the rest of his life. On the other hand, since I have no airs about myself and I simply am as I am, the person learns everything about me the moment he interacts with me. After that, a person may remain [in my company] or he may leave. In this way, I too am focussed. Those who consider piety in a person to mean that he must be totally unperceptive like an idol – which does not know who paid respects to it and who disgraced it – then their thoughts about me are disposed of in their first meeting with me. Furthermore, who is it who made claims to piety and who announced that they must come here? I am just a student. I merely convey whatever I learnt from my teachers and elders about Dīn. I express the reality of Dīn which I understood through the blessings of their companionship. If anyone wishes, he may accept it, if not, he has the right to refuse it. I do not know anything about flattery nor do I consider it beneficial. Although some people think that I ought to bring them gradually to my path, I am against it

because from my experience, when a person has a certain criterion for piety – whether right or wrong – he remains devoted to the person as long as he sees that criterion. No sooner he drops from that criterion, all the person's faith in him disappears. The person [the shaykh in this instance] assumes that this person is his devotee, whereas he is really devoted to his own thoughts and notions."

Similarly, if a devotee loses his faith [in the shaykh], the shaykh must realize that the devotee did not have faith in him in the first place. Rather, he had faith in some imaginary person. There is therefore no need to rue over the loss of such an imaginary devotee. In fact, he should be happy that he lost him before having established a bond with him. Had the bond been broken after it was established, it would have created a lot of ill-feeling. Furthermore, as long as the bond remained, the person would have vexed the shaykh a lot. This is why I have a very open and clear relationship with every seeker from the very beginning. The matter must be decided right from the beginning. Neither he nor I must be deceived and deluded. This is my approach."

I [the compiler] say: Hadrat Wālā's total disregard for what people think is a sign of his highest form of excellence, sincerity and truthfulness. A trader expressed this quality in his own business language: "Why should he flatter anyone? Is his product defective?"

This approach of Hadrat Wālā makes it very easy for newcomers to learn their first objective of coming here, i.e. to ascertain their affinity or lack of it with him. As for their second objective, i.e. learning the correct methodology for rectification, this is realized by attending Hadrat Wālā's assemblies because this is what he speaks about in them. Furthermore, Hadrat Wālā reads certain letters of the seekers to those who are present in his assemblies. He does this without disclosing the writer's identity. He verbally explains their errors. In this way, those who are present learn how to correspond with Hadrat Wālā about their own rectification and how to present their spiritual ailments to him. Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "Rectification is not realized by remaining in someone's company, affinity is developed. The person learns how to present his spiritual ailments, understands my replies, and develops the etiquette of practising on them."

The letter of a person who was sitting silently

This incident occurred just recently. The person remained silently in the Khānqāh for a few days and went back from where he had come. He writes: "I cannot describe the peace and tranquillity which I experienced in the course of my stay and remaining in Hadrat Wālā's blessed company. I specifically ascertained the defects of my self. The sickness of having evil thoughts about others is quite severe in me. I request its treatment from Hadrat Wālā."

Look! By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this man attached himself to the path in the proper manner from his very first visit. He then became occupied in the actual purpose of this bond – viz. rectification – in the proper manner. Hadrat Wālā too commenced his formal training immediately. There are many other seekers who – due to their follies and misdemeanours – are unable to succeed in this regard even after several months of correspondence.

This particular person's success is by virtue of the programme which Hadrat Wālā laid down for those who want to establish a bond with him, and which was quoted a few pages back.

The above-mentioned seeker's letter was quoted. We now quote Hadrat Wālā's reply to it. Bearing in mind that it is Hadrat Wālā's initial training of the person, it would serve as a lesson for new seekers. The person asked for a treatment for evil thoughts. Hadrat Wālā posed the following questions to him: "Are these evil thoughts voluntary or involuntary? Do you merely have evil thoughts [of a person] or do you act accordingly as well? What else do you do? Explain with a few examples."

Glory to Allāh! Look at Hadrat Wālā's questions! They are not really questions but answers to the person's ailment. In addition to subsidiary issues, general principles of the path can be derived from them through the slightest bit of pondering.

When seekers come in a group

Hadrat Wālā disapproves of seekers coming intentionally in a group. But if they come together coincidentally, he does not bother about it. The wisdoms behind not coming together are quoted from *Husn al-ʿAzīz*, vol. one, no. 36.

Some of my friends decided to go to Hadrat Wālā to meet him in Thānah Bhawan. He was gone to Kānpūr at the time. Hadrat Wālā said to them: "If you want to come solely to meet me, you may come as you like. But if you have any other intention (i.e. rectification), you must not come together. Instead, each person must come separately or else he will not benefit because it is obvious that each person will have to be treated according to his situation. If all of you come together, I will have to treat you alike. If I feel I have to be strict towards one of you, he will feel ashamed in the presence of his companions. It is therefore best for each person to come separately. This is actually a journey to the Hereafter. The dead go separately to their graves."

A reply to a person's request

A person wrote to Hadrat Wālā and expressed his intention of bringing his father. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "If you bring him with, you will have to see to his needs, to which I have no objection whatsoever. However, he will not benefit." Based on the above-mentioned wisdoms, Hadrat Wālā does not like anyone to come with anyone else.

The story of a seeker

I recall a particular incident in this regard. A seeker committed an offence for which he was handed over to one of Hadrat Wālā's khulafā'. This seeker used to come annually to meet Hadrat Wālā together with the khalīfah. Then on one occasion, he came on his own. When he was departing, Hadrat Wālā said to him: "During this particular visit of yours, I find a special effect on my heart because you came on your own. Previously you used to come subservient to another person. Consequently, I did not pay particular attention to you. I used to think to myself: He has come in the company of another."

I [the compiler] say: Bearing in mind that Hadrat Wālā's blessed temperament is extremely perceptive and sound, no matter what the issue is and of what level, it certainly has an equal effect on him.

A seeker is corrected for the manner in which he requested for du'ā'

I recall another incident in this regard. A person requested duʿā' for the recovery of a certain person who was ill. Hadrat Wālā asked him: "Are you making this request of your own

accord or did the patient ask you to make this request?" The man replied: "The patient had asked me." Hadrat Wālā said: "But you conveyed it in a manner which shows that you are making the request yourself. There is a world of difference between these two. The patient's personal request has more effect on the heart, and the du'ā' is made with more attention. One must be very particular about these matters. You do not even perceive such emotions!?"

Travelling when a task could be achieved via correspondence

Under the discussion on principles related to bay'ah we learnt that Hadrat Wālā does not permit anyone to undertake a journey solely for the sake of pledging bay'ah. He does not consider such a journey necessary because bay'ah can be realized through correspondence. Similarly, he does not approve of anyone journeying to him solely for du'ā' or for a ta'wīdh. Both these can be acquired through correspondence easily and at a cost of a few cents. In fact, he intentionally does not give ta'wīdh to such persons [who undertake a journey solely for this purpose]. He says to them: "When you return home, you must write to me and request a ta'wīdh." He used to do this so that everyone comes to know of it, in order to put a stop to such journeys, and to save people from unnecessary trouble and cost.

Absence of a public kitchen

Hadrat Wālā does not have any public kitchen for those who come here. Instead, when a request is made by the residents of the Khānqāh, some local people make arrangements for meals for free. There is a lot of ease in this way and both parties are at rest and comfort. Had there been a public kitchen, there would have been a lot of crowding and many would have continued their stay solely for the meals. It would have been difficult to differentiate the genuine seekers from the not so genuine ones.

Subsequently, there was an intelligent and wise student who went out in search of a shaykh. He had imposed certain conditions on himself. One of them was that he would become murīd of a shaykh who does not have a public kitchen because if he has a public kitchen and he has crowds of seekers there, it would be of no consideration because they must certainly be there because of the food. Hadrat Wālā also explains the

wisdom behind it: "If I had a public kitchen here, I would be constantly expecting those who come here to contribute something towards it. Since I do not have it, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* I do not even have whisperings about people making contributions. In fact, any person who gives me a gift against my restrictions and specific limits in this regard, I return the gift with absolute independence." (Hadrat Wālā's restrictions and limits with regard to gifts will – Allāh willing – be detailed in a later section).

An incident related to a Pīr Sāhib

Hadrat Wālā relates the story of a Pīr Sāhib of Sindh in this regard. He says: "This Pīr Sāhib had a public kitchen and fell into debts for six thousand rupees because of it. He came to me to write a letter of intercession on his behalf to a certain person to give him a loan of six thousand rupees. He used to say to me: 'The murīds came and ate all the rotīs, and many of them stayed over for several months without making any contribution.' I asked him: 'You now intend taking a loan from someone. How will you pay back the loan?' He replied: 'I will collect it from my murīds, where else will I get it from?' I thought to myself: 'Māshā Allāh! You are still expecting to receive something from your murīds?! If they were really people who would give, you would not have been in debt in the first place.'" In short, these are the harms of having a public kitchen.

Who would have taken responsibility of the public kitchen?

Hadrat Wālā continues: "Furthermore, who would have taken the responsibility to run and administer the public kitchen? My temperament is of such a nature that I would have been constantly concerned and worried about it, and a type of affliction would have got me. This is because – first of all – I do not place the slightest burden on anyone. Secondly, I do not consider it enough to give the responsibility to others and then absolve myself from them. My attitude in this regard is supported by an incident concerning Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* which I came across in a book. He said to certain special Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* that since the work related to the Caliphate has increased tremendously, it has become difficult for him to carry it out on his own. Therefore, he would take the responsibility of seeing to only the most important matters, and handing over tasks to reliable people. He asked: 'If I hand over

such matters to others, will it be enough to absolve me of supervision of those matters?' They all replied that it would not be enough. Instead, after delegating the tasks to others, it will be necessary for him to check whether they have been carried out correctly or not."

Hadrat Wālā then said: "This is also my decision in this regard. I must continue carrying out a task as long as I can do it on my own. When I can no longer control it, then instead of delegating it to others, I must give it up completely. I have experienced that leaving a task by relying on others to do it in most cases leaves it incomplete. I heard the following about the independence of a certain spiritual master. He does not personally touch any money – whether in the form of notes or coins. Instead, all gifts – whether in cash or items - are placed before him. His attendants then take the gifts and spend or use them wherever necessary. The spiritual master himself remains totally aloof from all arrangements. Since I too am free-loving by nature, I was very much attracted to his practice. I too decided to keep myself aloof from all administrative matters. However, Allāh *taʿālā* steered me that very evening. The youngster who works at home was given wheat which he had to take to Jalālābād and have it ground into flour at a mill. He returned much earlier than usual. I expressed my astonishment at his quick return. He said: "Night was approaching quite fast and I still had to return on foot by walking over two miles. Out of consideration for me, the people at the mill gave me ground flour, and took the wheat and an amount of money for grinding it in exchange." I said: "This transaction is impermissible. If this flour is eaten, everyone will be committing the sin of usury. Go back and return this flour, and have our own wheat ground and come back with it." This incident immediately brought me to attention and I realized the harms of delegating tasks to others. I then thought to myself: The correct way is certainly the one which was of our elders. I must not change that way and I must certainly interfere in matters which concern me."

Food arrangements for guests

After relating these incidents by the way, I return to the original topic of the public kitchen. Although Hadrat Wālā has no arrangements for a public kitchen, guests whom he feels need to be fed are fed with an open-heart. After the arrival of a

train, Hadrat Wālā's workers are instructed to go and ask if there are any guests. In most cases, food is sent to the guests in the Khānqāh. Some guests are called to Hadrat Wālā's house and fed there. But if Hadrat Wālā himself is not hungry, he does not go into unnecessary formalities. He feeds the guests and excuses himself. Sometimes, he does not join the guests in the meal but remains seated with them. If there are guests of different ranks, he emphasises on the workers to give each one his food separately so that if a guest is not comfortable with other guests, he does not feel restricted. Thereafter, if they wish to eat together, it is their choice.

Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī comes as a guest

Hadrat Wālā treats each guest according to his rank. Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* came as a guest on one occasion. A person who liked to nitpick counted the number of utensils which were used and said: "Seventy two utensils were used whereas there were only four or five people who partook of the meal." The Maulānā asked: "Why did you go into so much of trouble?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Hadrat himself is the reason for all these formalities. If you come more often, I will not do this. Since you have come after several years, my heart desires to present the best items which are available because I may not get the opportunity again."

Hosting a Nawāb Sāhib

Similarly, a very high ranking Nawāb Sāhib came as a guest. Several types of dishes were prepared for him. Hadrat Wālā excused his formalities by saying: "By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I did not have to purchase anything from outside. Even the chicken is from my yard." Hadrat Wālā added: "Another reason for doing all this is to show you that Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace – has given me sufficient food and drink. In this way, you will be happy and I will not be worried because Allāh *taʿālā* has given me all the means of comfort. I am not in need."

Treatment of madrasah students

Large numbers of students from Deoband and Sahāranpūr come to the Khānqāh during the holidays. If Hadrat Wālā learns that they need money for food, he sends one of his workers to enquire from each of them separately. Those who express a need are assisted with cash money. They remain as guests for several days. Similarly, on many occasions many

senior ʿulamā' and trustees of Madāris come for advice on Dīnī matters. They all remain as guests of Hadrat Wālā.

Discretion in hospitality

In short, there is no specific rule in hospitality. Instead, Hadrat Wālā practises on whatever is needed at the time and what is most prudent. On one occasion, a large number of women from a village came to Thānah Bhawan to become mūrīds. They had neither informed Hadrat Wālā of their intention to come nor did they obtain permission from him. Hadrat Wālā's family became worried about the feeding arrangements for these women. Hadrat Wālā said to his family: "Why are you worrying? Give them the items to be cooked, show them to the stove and tell them to cook their own food." Consequently, this is exactly what was done. To sum up, Hadrat Wālā's hospitality is solely according to need and what is most prudent. Hadrat Wālā does not take more trouble than necessary on his head. In fact, he does not allow impositions on his own time even when it comes to hosting special guests. He will pay special attention to such guests for some time, make all arrangements for their rest and comfort, take permission to leave and continue with his work. Hadrat Wālā did the same on the arrival of his respected teacher Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. After making all the necessary arrangements for him, when the time came for him to do his writing work, he respectfully sought his teacher's permission to leave for a short while to do his writing work. He then returned quickly. In this way, he did not attach himself too much to his work nor did he leave it out for that day.

Consideration for special guests

When he learns of the impending arrival of a special guest, Hadrat Wālā takes the burden of doing more than his normal work so that his essential and necessary tasks can be completed. In this way, when the guest arrives, he can pay more attention to him. He even goes to the extent of giving up his siesta time and deferring his replying to letters in order to converse with the special guests who are about to depart. He then imposes on himself to complete replying to the letters before the final departure of the post. If there is a special need or if he sees it prudent, he gives those who have come for a short stay more opportunities to remain seated with him and

he tries to give them as much Dīnī information according to what their condition requires.

I always observe Hadrat Wālā spending more time in delivering talks to those who have come to stay for a short time. He speaks to them with full enthusiasm and zeal, mentions many unique and beneficial facts to them (even to the extent of delaying the meals). He does this so that they may be satisfied and the path [of Sufism] may be fully proliferated. Hadrat Wālā is extremely desirous of proliferating the path provided it is a gathering of genuine seekers. It is an accepted ruling of this field that a shaykh must be desirous of proliferating the path. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā is most desirous of proliferating it through his own conditions, statements, writings and discourses. His night and day are devoted to it. When there are those who have come for a short stay, then apart from his general assembly after the zuhr salāh, he conducts a special assembly in the morning after having completed his other necessary tasks.

Such persons are informed of the additional assembly and of the time and place where they should assemble. In this way, when the actual time for the assembly arrives, they can all be brought together immediately and it does not become necessary to go to each person individually. We see from this the extreme consideration which Hadrat Wālā shows to the people. However, it is to the limit which is necessary while not imposing on his own time.

Receiving guests

Sometimes, very special, distinguished and honourable guests come to meet him. Hadrat Wālā gets up from his place and embraces them. However, on most of these occasions he prohibits the others who are seated from standing up by saying to them that he is standing up on their behalf. Everyone else should therefore remain seated. This is especially so when it comes to people of worldly honour – he certainly prohibits the others from standing up for them. When it comes to some very special associates, Hadrat Wālā really feels like going to the station to receive them but does not do this because it would cause much shame to such guests.

Abstaining from insisting on guests to stay longer

No matter how distinguished and beloved a guest may be and no matter how much the heart may want him to remain, Hadrat Wālā never insists on anyone to stay longer. In fact, the moment he hears about a guest's intention to depart, he immediately says: "Do whatever is best for you." Yes, there are times when he is quite informal with a person, so he would say jokingly to him: "This cannot even be considered to be a visit. It was just a passing." If the person seems to be unmindful of the impending departure to the railway station, then – contrary to his norm – Hadrat Wālā reminds the person so that in the case where he misses the train he does not have to remain behind against his wish or to rue over missing the train.

Prerequisites and regulations for those who present themselves

If a seeker who has already been given a general permission to come and go seeks another special permission as a precaution, then Hadrat Wālā permits him provided the journey is not going to impose on him in any way, he does not have to take a loan for the journey and he would not be trampling on anyone's rights in the process. A woman wrote to Hadrat Wālā and expressed her intense desire to come and meet him. Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "I give you permission provided your husband brings you happily, you'll do not have to take any loans to come, it will not cause any inconvenience to you, you do not impose on him to bring you and there will be no shortcomings as regards purdah and performing salāh during the journey."

Those who are present are forbidden from reprimanding newcomers

Hadrat Wālā emphasises that when any newcomer commits an offence, no one in the Khānqāh may reprimand him and no one is to give him advice without having asked for it. He says in this regard: "Am I not enough to reprimand anyone? I reprimand and scold quite a bit. If others were to reprimand him as well, the poor fellow will get distressed. Furthermore, scolding from every other person cannot be tolerated. Anyway, my scolding does not cause so much of displeasure because people come here specifically because of me. If others were to reprimand and scold them, it will certainly break their heart. This is something which I can never tolerate. Furthermore, every person does not know how to advise and counsel others."

"Another harm is that if others were to reprimand the newcomers, the latter would consider the former to be my close associates and feel intimidated by them. In addition to this, they will make them intermediaries for their needs. They will also give them gifts and other things in order to win them over as intermediaries. This will open thousands of doors of corruption for both parties. It will be harmful to me as well because when I see so many helpers and supporters, my head will also become bloated [I will feel proud over having so many helpers]. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, at present I do not consider anyone to be my assistant and helper. My gaze is not on anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. This is not something for me to say but since we are on this subject, I am saying that I consider myself to be completely alone in this world. I do not consider anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā* to be mine. I am all alone in this world, and this solitary man has just one Being with him, and no one else."

"People normally rely on their attendants and close associates. I do not rely on anyone. I do not consider anyone to be my beloved, helper and supporter. One of the reasons for my "dryness" is that I do not want to make anyone my beloved. In this way, I can freely interact with every person in a manner which is suited to him. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, I do not even experience a whispering of thinking to myself: "Do not treat the person in this manner, he may give up supporting me." I am not saying this as a claim, in fact, I even fear saying it: Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows how true and factual this is. I am not saying something which is factual according to me. May Allāh *taʿālā* pardon me if there is any shortcoming in this regard. Just as every person will depart alone when he dies, I consider myself to be absolutely alone even before death. I do not consider anyone to be with me."

H̲ad̲rat Wālā also said: "The basis for what I am saying is that Allāh *taʿālā* alone has – through His grace and kindness – preserved this condition of mine. He fulfils my need from the unseen at the exact time when I need it. He provides the means for my comfort from avenues which I never even thought of. This is why I can continue and maintain my attitude of independence and freedom. If I ever fell into need, all my independence would have disappeared and my freedom vanished."

I [the compiler] say: Glory to Allāh! What a lofty condition! An unqualified person like me to express my opinion in this regard is similar to displaying a lamp before the sun. Look at his distinguished status despite spending night and day in the service of Allāh's creation. Look at the overwhelming self-obliteration with the intense bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Wonder at his absolute servitude and his independence from all apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. Such personalities actually combine opposites and are manifestations of the Hadīth:

موتوا قبل أن تموتوا

Die before your actual deaths.

A poet says:

> This fortune cannot be acquired by physical strength. It is only and solely a bestowal from Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Etiquette of meeting and speaking

This point contains matters pertaining to the etiquette of meeting, speaking, sitting in an assembly and so on. These are mentioned as examples. Hadrat Wālā considers them to be the responsibility of the visitors because they [etiquette] are natural and do not need any instruction from anyone. This is why he considers shortcomings in this regard to be most displeasing. He always says: "These are absolutely general principles which every person ought to consider when he interacts with every other person."

Enquiring about visiting hours

Hadrat Wālā says: "When a person goes to meet a person for the first time, he must enquire about the visiting times and other necessary points from those who are residing there. Only then must he go to meet the person."

Visitors must ascertain the best time and place of meeting the moment they arrive

Hadrat Wālā did not set aside any specific time for a first visit so that visitors do not have to wait. As a principle, they must meet him soon after they arrive. When Hadrat Wālā sees a stranger, he waits to be introduced to him. A person came and

did not meet Hadrat Wālā at all. Hadrat Wālā remained doubtful each time he saw the man. When he shook hands with Hadrat Wālā at the time of his departure, he expressed his severe displeasure to the man and prohibited him from coming back or from corresponding with him. When the man sought pardon via another person, Hadrat Wālā granted him permission to come back on condition that his bond of rectification will have to be established by one of Hadrat Wālā's khulafā'. Hadrat Wālā said to him: "When mistakes are committed in such basic and obvious matters, how can there be mutual affinity?"

In short, newcomers must meet Hadrat Wālā soon after arrival provided he is available to meet and not resting or occupied in some other important task. The person must gauge the situation and then go to meet him. If he sees Hadrat Wālā busy, he must sit down. He must not remain standing while waiting for him because this demonstrates a type of demand which weighs heavily on the heart.

Introduce yourself immediately after greeting: Once a person greets Hadrat Wālā, he must introduce himself completely. If he had corresponded with Hadrat Wālā before his arrival, he must present the last letter which he had written to him. The person must remain seated when speaking to him. The person must speak clearly and audibly so that Hadrat Wālā can hear him easily. He must say in full whatever he has to say. He must not speak in half measures and expect Hadrat Wālā to ask him the remaining subject matter. Hadrat Wālā himself commences by saying: "Say whatever you have to say." He does this so that a stranger may open up and feel free to speak. However, this does not mean that once a person commences speaking about himself, he must expect Hadrat Wālā to ask him questions to continue. He must answer questions immediately. It is most disturbing to him when there is a delay in answering questions. If he does not know what answer to give, he must say: "I will think about it and give an answer later on." Most newcomers do not answer questions despite asking them repeatedly. They just remain silent. Hadrat Wālā asks them to leave, saying: "If you cannot answer my questions, what is the benefit of remaining seated here?" In fact, if such a person vexes Hadrat Wālā more, then he does not even permit him to attend his assemblies because sitting near such a person also disturbs him. When some people are

asked to leave, they go and stand behind the wall. Hadrat Wālā does not permit this also because it is just like sitting in the assembly. In fact, it is a type of deception and a form of spying which is prohibited.

Mistakes must be acknowledged immediately

This point is also very noteworthy. If a person errs, he must acknowledge it immediately without resorting to any excuses and explanations. If he is asked the reason for it – as is the habit of Hadrat Wālā in most cases – the person must express the actual reason. Hadrat Wālā asks for the reason in order to ascertain whether the person has understood the reality of his mistake or not. If a person cannot provide the actual reason, Hadrat Wālā continues posing one question after another, and refutes – with proofs – the person's fictional answers such as claiming ignorance, stupidity, misunderstanding and so on. Hadrat Wālā's proofs are so clear and sensible that the person is compelled to accept them. Since most of the mistakes are silly and obvious, they are inevitably committed due to lack of concern. And lack of concern stems from insufficient respect and reverence. Hadrat Wālā complains about this most of the time and gives the example of rulers and says: "Why do they not commit the same mistakes in the presence of rulers? The reason is that a desire and respect for the world is in the heart, but not for Dīn."

Presenting a letter

If a person has to present a letter or note, he must place it in front and say: "Please see this note." He must not continue holding it in his hands because this would impose on him to drop it the moment he has to do some other task with his hands.

Presenting a letter and shaking hands at the same time

If a person has to present a note and shake hands as well, he must first shake hands and then present his note or letter. Some people extended their hands while holding a note in their hands. Hadrat Wālā was severely discomforted by this because he did not know what the person wanted to do – did he want to present his note or did he want to shake hands? Others removed their notes from their pockets and when Hadrat Wālā was about to receive the note from them, they extended their hands to shake hands with him. This also discomforted him.

Explaining the reason for one's visit

A person must clearly explain the reason for his visit. If a person was travelling for some other purpose and he just stopped by to meet Hadrat Wālā, he must make mention of this as well. Some people portray as if they have undertaken a very lengthy journey and state that they intend remaining for a very short while. Hadrat Wālā immediately realizes that something is not right. After posing a few questions to the person, he learns that the man had come to a nearby place for some work. While there, he felt like coming to meet Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā says on such occasions: "Only burden me with that amount of the journey which a person had to travel to meet me. He must not portray as if he undertook a very long journey, and that too, for such a short stay."

Complete information about the reason for coming must be provided

Hadrat Wālā is not satisfied as long as a person does not provide full information about himself and the actual purpose for coming to him. He needs to know this so that he can treat the person accordingly. There were some people who appeared to be distinguished people. Despite Hadrat Wālā's inquiries, they did not provide full information about themselves. Hadrat Wālā clearly said to them: "I do not have any personal motive. I like to obtain information about you for your own good. If you are not going to introduce yourself adequately, you have the right to so. However, in such a case, I too will treat you solely according to my rules. I will therefore be excused in this regard."

The story of a Ra'īs

An aged and knowledgeable Ra'īs did the same thing. He did not provide adequate information about himself despite Hadrat Wālā's inquiries. Hadrat Wālā said the same thing to him as quoted above. Although Hadrat Wālā obtained more information about him later on through other people, he did not accord any special attention to him. Hadrat Wālā did not request him to sit in a distinguished place in his assembly, as he normally does to such people. After having lived in the Khānqāh for about seven to ten days, the man provided full information about himself via a note which he wrote to Hadrat Wālā. Only then did Hadrat Wālā accord special attention to him and requested him to sit in a distinguished place in his

assembly. We see from all this that Hadrat Wālā's distinguishing quality is to maintain every matter within its limit and to practise according to what it demands. He does not allow his temperament to have the better of wisdom and intelligence.

The order to be present at meal times

Those who have been informed by Hadrat Wālā that he will see to their meals must remain in the Khānqāh at meal times so that no one has to go out in search for them.

Visitors becoming friendly with each other

Hadrat Wālā never approves of the establishing of any bond or contact between visitors and those who are residing in the Khānqāh. He wants the Khānqāh to have the following atmosphere [as described in a couplet]:

> Paradise is the place where there is no discomfort,
> and no one is in need of another for anything.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the attention of Hadrat Wālā, this is the atmosphere in the Khānqāh. If some people have had any contact from before, they are not prohibited from meeting and interacting according to the need. However, he disapproves of them meeting and interacting too much, engaging in futile conversations and wasting time. He said on one occasion: "I want each and every person to remain occupied in his own work. In fact, I desire that no one must speak to another unnecessarily."

I [the compiler] say: Hadrat Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* concluded his book, *Prerequisites which must be abided by those who are treading the path of Allāh*, with the following prerequisite:

لا يترك الشيخ المريدين يجتمعون أصلا دونه إلا إذا جمعهم بحضرته ومتى تركهم يجتمعون دونه فقد أساء في حقهم.

A shaykh must never permit his murīds to assemble on their own without him being there. If he permits them to assemble on their own, he has faltered in fulfilling their rights.

The residents of the Khānqāh are specifically prohibited from interacting with newcomers, especially rulers and seniors. In fact, some people were reprimanded and scolded for doing this,

while attention to this fact was drawn to others in a general address [without directing it at any one in particular]. Bearing in mind that Hadrat Wālā leads a very independent life, he desires his associates to live in the same manner.

However, animosity and impoliteness are not permitted. For residents of the Khānqāh to make a practice of getting together to have their meals or to invite each other is also against the rules of the Khānqāh. They are strictly prohibited from establishing contact with the local residents. A resident of the Khānqāh – like a few others who had left the hometowns forever and came to live in the Khānqāh – was strictly prohibited from going out of the Khānqāh. He too upheld this prohibition to such an extent that he did not go out for several years. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, he recently got the opportunity of emigrating to Madīnah and is now residing there.

Etiquette of serving

Service should not be accepted unnecessarily

Hadrat Wālā cannot tolerate accepting any service from anyone for as long as his heart is not opened towards him. In fact, he would very rarely and only for very light tasks make a request for a service from a person towards whom his heart has opened. But if a person hastens to fulfil a service on his own, Hadrat Wālā does not stop him. At the same time, he cannot bear for someone to submit himself before him except on very rare occasions. Hadrat Wālā says: "It is good to do some of your work yourself." He also complains: "Some people's service is no service. It is a disservice because they do not even know how to render it. For example, someone brought istinjā'[1] water which was extremely hot. I only came to know of it when I began pouring it. Since my body had already become wet, I could not come out and wait for the water to cool to a moderate temperature. I had to endure a lot of difficulty in blowing the water to cool it, and then washed myself. This certainly caused me hardship. Similarly, some people offer very hot or boiling water for wudū'. This is why I ask for two separate water-cans, one hot and the other cold. In this way, I can mix it as I like. I

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[1] Istinjā' refers to the act of washing one's private parts after having relieved one's self.

ask for a full can of hot water and a half can of cold water. In this way, I can pour the hot water into the cold water until the desired temperature. Yet others start swinging the veranda fan without even knowing how to do it. If a person gets up to leave, the one swinging the fan does not stop and the poor fellow gets hurt. The one whom I permitted to swing the fan has been instructed to immediately release the rope completely the moment anyone gets up to leave so that there is no possibility whatsoever of anyone getting hurt. If he were to continue holding the rope, there is the possibility of it slipping from his hand and the fan striking the person in his head. Secondly – and this happens quite often – the person who is leaving cannot gauge correctly for how long the one swinging the fan will hold the rope back and to what extent. Thus, there is always the possibility of the person getting hurt; and there were times when people really did get hurt. Furthermore, if the person continues holding the rope, it gives the impression that the person who is leaving must leave quickly because he may continue swinging the fan. However, in the case of releasing the rope completely, the person who is leaving may do so easily and freely. There is no possibility whatsoever of getting hurt."

"There are many examples of this nature. How much more can I speak about them? Furthermore, each person's temperament, disposition and habits are different. Only a person who has full knowledge can know which manner of serving will bring comfort. In addition to this, I do not know whether the person will carry out the service sincerely because later we learn that some people had certain motives in serving. Moreover, I find it difficult to accept service from 'ulamā', sayyids[1] and old people."

No one must feel imposed through service

Hadrat Wālā says: "I want each and every one to be occupied in his respective task. They must not unnecessarily impose on me in order to serve me. In this way, they are free to do what they have to, and I am also free. This is because freedom is a great bounty. Freedom is the essence of my temperament. Whether it is humiliation or reverence – if either of the two cause any disturbance in my freedom or the freedom of anyone else, it disturbs me. This ought to be the temperament of every

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[1] The family of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.*

Muslim – that is, he must be free from everyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. How can servitude to Allāh *taʿālā* be combined with servitude to the creation?"

One wisdom behind not accepting service

Hadrat Wālā explains one of the reasons behind not accepting service from people: "No one must assume that he is close or special to me. This contains many harms for the person himself and for others as well. Another harm of it is that when a person renders his service, he assumes that he has fulfilled his duty and does not occupy himself in his tasks [of reformation and rectification which have been given to him]."

The story of a villager

One day after the ʿishā salāh when Hadrat Wālā was about to proceed to his house, a villager took Hadrat Wālā's shoes and placed them before him so that it would easy for him to put them on. Hadrat Wālā has two pairs of shoes, one rugged pair which he wears when walking out in the fields in the morning; and another ordinary pair which he wears around the house. The villager placed the pair which Hadrat Wālā did not normally wear at night. Hadrat Wālā had to himself bear the trouble of getting the other pair. Hadrat Wālā said: "O brother! A person who is not aware of my habits must not render any service. Now look at the inconvenience which your service caused! Of what benefit is such a service? This is why I find more comfort in carrying out my tasks on my own. How can a person who is not aware of my habits render any service?"

The same man had brought Hadrat Wālā's shoes the previous night and placed them for him. On that occasion, all he told him when he was leaving was: "Oh! You have carried out such a heavy task. You should have rather carried some heavy goods from 10-20 miles. O brother! Do you call this any service? You should have done something which brings comfort. Do you think I could not bring my shoes on my own?" The next night, the person did the same thing as described above.

While proceeding to his house, Hadrat Wālā said: "Customs have overwhelmed the hearts in such a manner that they cannot give them up. The man merely saw everyone else picking up my shoes and placing them before me, so he decided to do the same. It was merely a custom which he was carrying out. I also feel ashamed at the fact that when a person

renders a service out of love, why should I stop him? But what can I do? It disturbs me severely and wasting even a single minute is burdensome to me. Yes, the one who likes to be served all the time, he may continue bothering about it. Now look, I am carrying a book to my house. I will be spending the night writing. The man's service caused all this inconvenience and my time getting wasted is another matter. I have explained this matter to him. Tomorrow he will depart. Another new person will arrive and I will have to start the entire process again. Must I spend all my time teaching these things? Certain things are very easy to do but difficult to explain to others." I [the compiler] too have rendered the service of placing shoes. Hadrat Wālā said to me: "There is no need to adhere to this service. I do not want to impose on anyone nor do I want to be restricted. By Allāh's grace, there are many to serve me. There is no need for you to do it. You must occupy yourself in the task for which you came here. This is what I find comfort in. In fact, when anyone serves me, it causes me more inconvenience."

Obtaining permission to serve

Bearing in mind the above teachings, those towards whom Hadrat Wālā's heart has opened must not hasten in serving him. They must obtain permission from him first. Hadrat Wālā himself says this repeatedly. As for those towards whom Hadrat Wālā's heart has not opened as yet, they must not render any service at all. In fact, they must not even ask for permission because Hadrat Wālā is severely disturbed and displeased by the service of such people. He emphatically stops them from it. Sometimes, he grants permission out of kindness but if he is discomforted thereafter, he has to prohibit the person.

Do not insist on serving

When Hadrat Wālā stops a person from serving him, the person must stop immediately. He is severely disturbed when anyone insists. Insisting is also unmannerly. A person insisted on carrying Hadrat Wālā's shoes, so he said to him: "Very well, you may carry them but I will certainly not wear them. I will walk barefoot to my house." The man only desisted when the matter reached this point. Hadrat Wālā's prohibitions are not restricted to this one matter only. When he says something, it must be carried out immediately. Do not wait for him to say it

again and again because he does not say anything merely out of formality. When he says something, he says it after having thought about it seriously. He says something which is certain – there can be no change and alteration in it. To insist is therefore absolutely futile. In fact, it is harmful to both parties and causes ill-feeling on both sides. Some people, by nature, do not carry out an instruction unless they are told repeatedly. They delay in carrying it out in the hope that the instruction will become lax and they will only carry it out once it is lax. This is a most harmful trait.

Hadrat Wālā's needs are few

Hadrat Wālā says: "I have restricted my needs to such an extent that I can fulfil them by myself. I am not in need of anyone. Nowadays, I have given up taking any service from such and such people because I had always been discomforted by them. Initially they had many responsibilities and one of them was also a paid worker. All praise is due to Allāh, I never experienced any restriction despite many months having passed since taking any work from them. By virtue of the fact that I am free loving by nature, my needs are very few, and I can fulfil them by myself."

The etiquette of looking at a person

The prohibition of staring at a person repeatedly

Most newcomers stare at Hadrat Wālā's movements to such an extent that he himself becomes aware of it. This is most inappropriate because the person who is being stared at becomes self-conscious, there is a difference in his freedom and it weighs on his heart. On these occasions, Hadrat Wālā expresses his displeasure by saying: "Is there something strange or funny that you are staring at me like that?" If a person really has a desire to look at him, he must look in such a way that Hadrat Wālā does not perceive anyone staring at him or paying particular attention to him.

Turning around to look at Hadrat Wālā

Similarly, some people who are sitting in the front row continually look back at Hadrat Wālā or stand up for him when he is entering the musjid and proceeding to the front. They do this to make way for him. Hadrat Wālā is severely disturbed and annoyed by this as well. He says: "No changes must take

place as a result of my arrival. Each person must continue sitting as he had been. I detest it severely when there is a clamour or commotion merely because of my arrival. No attention must be given to making way for me."

"I will enter as I wish and proceed to the front from wherever I like. If there is no place, I will place my hand on the shoulders of people and point to them to lean slightly forward, and allow me to move forward in this way."

He also says: "I do this to save them from discomfort. Sometimes I myself am discomforted because I see a gap to move forward and head in that direction, while the person who is seated shifts slightly in the direction of the gap and wants to give me place from the other side. I now have to change my intention and sometimes still fail because that place too falls away in the same manner."

"In short, it causes a lot of confusion. Looking for a way out should therefore be left to me. I will take a path which I feel is most appropriate. I do not want to be inconvenienced myself nor do I want anyone to be inconvenienced because of me. At the same time, I should not be treated in a manner which shows that I have a high status. This also stresses me. Similarly, when I enter the musjid to lead the people in s̲alāh, some people walk behind me unnecessarily. I am very annoyed by it firstly because it gives the impression that people were waiting in the musjid for my arrival. Waiting for a person in such a manner is a futile act. The second reason why I do not like anyone to walk behind me is that if I find a need to go back, I will feel restricted knowing the fact that a group of people are walking behind me, I will have to disrupt them and cause them inconvenience."

"Moreover, it appears wrong to enter a musjid while people are walking behind me because it is a form of status and superiority. Some people take unlawful benefit from walking behind me because they occupy the places which were left empty for me to walk through. People leave these empty places for me despite my prohibiting them from doing so. Those who walk behind me and occupy these empty places have no right whatsoever to do so because they arrived much later than those who were already in the musjid. Furthermore, since the place is quite cramped, by these people walking with me and occupying those places, they cause it to become even more

cramped. Some people come to shake hands with me at the exact time when I enter the musjid and proceed forward to perform the salāh. This delays me. Sometimes there is very little time so I intend reaching the front quickly, but these people think of shaking hands with me and delay me further. When I complete my salāh, I remain seated and occupy myself in certain forms of dhikr. Some people also remain seated with the sole intention of waiting to meet me. This causes me to lose my focus in my dhikr. On one occasion, a person tried to shake hands with me while I was engaged in my dhikr. When he saw that I was not paying any attention to me, he said: "I want to shake hands." I too – without turning to him – said: "I am busy in dhikr." I am extremely cautious about disturbing anyone when they are engaged in their dhikr because the spiritual masters have written that Allāh *taʿālā* is severely offended by this because a servant of Allāh is focussed on Him and another person is diverting that focus away from Him."

"Some people come and sit behind me while I am occupied in dhikr. I thoroughly rectified one person in this regard. He came and sat down behind me. So I got up and went and sat down behind him. When he was about to get up, I reprimanded him saying: "No one should dare get up from his place." He was very embarrassed but could do nothing about it. He was forced to remain seated. In the meantime, I took my time in reading my different forms of dhikr and continued in this way for a long time. I only permitted him to get up and leave when I completed all my dhikr. I asked him: "Were you discomforted in any way?" He replied: "Yes, I was severely discomforted but I continued sitting out of fear." I said: "I am also discomforted when anyone sits behind me." He said: "But you are a Buzurg." I said: "You are also a Buzurg because you are a Muslim, and I consider every Muslim to be a Buzurg. Beware of ever doing this again."

After issuing warnings of this nature, Hadrat Wālā says: "These are all annoying and uncultured actions. They ought to be borne in mind – not only here but everywhere else."

Greeting

Hadrat Wālā does not like seekers to convey salām, messages, letters, gifts, etc. on behalf of others – especially those with whom Hadrat Wālā is not informal. Some people bring gifts and letters of some of Hadrat Wālā's special associates and use this

as a means to gain proximity to Hadrat Wālā and to receive special treatment from him. Others are only concerned about conveying salāms of others while not worried in the least about their own rectification. They feel they have fulfilled the rights of a bond with Hadrat Wālā. If those who are fully occupied in their own rectification convey the salāms or messages of others occasionally, there is no harm in it.

Interceding

The seekers are not permitted to bring any letter of intercession from anyone nor should they request anyone to intercede on their behalf. There is no use in intercession in matters of Dīn because Hadrat Wālā will treat each person in a manner which is suited to him. An intercession means that the person wants to impress on Hadrat Wālā to treat him in a manner which the person himself desires. Neither does a seeker have such a right nor will acting according to his wishes be of any benefit to him. Hadrat Wālā is not impressed by such intercessions. In fact, in most cases he returns such intercessions without fulfilling them. He does this so that both the person and the one who interceded on his behalf will realize the needlessness of this action, its uselessness, and in fact, its harm. Furthermore, it will put an end to future intercessions.

A person repeatedly requested bayʿah through the intercession of another person, and Hadrat Wālā refused repeatedly. But when the person wrote his own letter directly, Hadrat Wālā accepted with the first letter which he received.

Presenting gifts

Newcomers and all others towards whom Hadrat Wālā's heart has not opened fully must not present any type of gift to him. If a person really wants to give him a gift, he must obtain permission first. If Hadrat Wālā refuses because the prerequisites for presenting gifts have not been fulfilled, the person must never insist. The prerequisites and etiquette of gifts will – Allāh willing – be explained further on.

Etiquette of the assembly

Being aware of the times of the assembly

Nowadays, the general assembly commences after zuhr and ends at the time of the ʿasr adhān. This is mentioned in the time-table which is pasted on the wall outside the assembly

room. No one is to go to Hadrat Wālā apart for meetings on arrival and before departure. If a special assembly is being conducted in the morning, one should not attend without having obtained special permission. If a person has to meet him on arrival or departure during the times of the assembly, he must meet him, introduce himself, explain the object of his arrival clearly, and leave the assembly immediately.

Do not sit in reserved places

There is a small corner near where Hadrat Wālā sits. This place is reserved for those who have something to say to him or meet him. Some people began sitting here permanently. So Hadrat Wālā reprimanded them by saying: "You ought to have realized that if this place is empty, it must be for some reason. People are already sitting everywhere from before hand, why are they not sitting here? It is against the etiquette of the assembly not to think of such matters."

In short, no one must sit permanently in the reserved place near Hadrat Wālā. A person may say whatever he has to say to him, meet him and then proceed to sit where everyone else is sitting.

Do not constrict those who are seated

At the same time, do not sit in such a way that you constrict those who are already seated from before hand. Furthermore, no one must be made to get up or move from his place. If there is an empty place near, do not go and sit further away unnecessarily.

Do not sit far away if there is place at the front

Some people sit at a distance even when there is place at the front, or, if a place in front of them becomes vacant, they remain seated in the back. Hadrat Wālā drew the attention of the people to this by saying: "You are sitting in a manner which will intimidate a newcomer. He will think to himself: 'This is a very intimidating assembly, no one has the courage to sit nearby.' Now, what, do you want to make me appear like a wolf before people?"

Do not sit completely next to each other

A few uncouth people came to meet Hadrat Wālā at the wrong time and then sat down very close to each other. Hadrat Wālā

said: “If you show respect, you go to the limit of formalities and make a show of it. If you are informal, you go to the limit of doing foolish things. The minds have become so distorted that there seems to be no moderation whatsoever except in a few people. People either commit excesses or shortcomings. Whereas Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

In this way did We make you a balanced nation.

The above verse is supported by the following narrations:

خير الأمور أوسطها

The best matters are the balanced ones.

وخير الأعمال أوسطها (كلاهما في المقاصد الحسنة، والأول في كنوز الحقائق أيضا، وهما يصلحان للتأييد وإن لم يثبت سندهما).

The best deeds are the balanced ones.

A sound temperament also demands moderation and a balance.

Special people must sit in their special places

In the course of the assembly, the western section of the assembly area is reserved for special people. Only those whom Hadrat Wālā asks to sit in that place may sit there, or those who know from before hand that Hadrat Wālā normally seats them there. In fact, the latter people must sit there without being told. They must not hesitate because when Hadrat Wālā learns that they are sitting with everyone else, he has to ask them to leave and sit in the designated place. Even if the place in the designated area is less, he jokingly says to them: “Come here – Allāh willing – you will get a place to sit.”

A tasbīh is not to be read in front of Hadrat Wālā

When you consider a person to be more senior to you, it is disrespectful to sit with a tasbīh before him and to read over it in a displaying manner because it smacks of a claim. A person should therefore not sit in front of Hadrat Wālā with a tasbīh. He should either do it by covering it with a cloth or engage in verbal dhikr [without a tasbīh]. Once Hadrat Wālā commences saying anything in his assembly, verbal dhikr should also stop.

Instead, he must focus himself to listen attentively to his words. At the same time, as mentioned above, he should not stare at Hadrat Wālā – neither in the course of his discourses nor at any other time. Staring at a person causes a heavy weight on him and he is no longer free with his actions and doings. He cannot remain focussed because he is constantly thinking that this person is looking at me all the time.

Do not converse with each other

It is against the etiquette of an assembly to engage in conversations with each other. Hadrat Wālā constantly prohibits it. He says: "If anyone wishes to talk, he may leave the assembly and talk outside." If you have to say something absolutely essential, do not say it in whispers. Instead say it in a tone which Hadrat Wālā can also hear. Do not whisper nor shout out. Speak openly in a balanced tone.

The addressee must remain attentive

When it comes to general teachings, Hadrat Wālā directs himself to the special people who are present. The one who is addressed must pay particular attention. He must show his approval to points which are laudable and he may even express his verbal approval if the occasion warrants it. Hadrat Wālā says that this is from among the etiquette of an address. If not, if a person remains silent, dumb and unperceptive, the speaker will not know whether his addressee is understanding what is being said or not. If this happens, the speaker's thought processes and subject matter cease.

The addressee must not speak unnecessarily

Similarly, Hadrat Wālā says that one of the etiquette of being addressed is that whatever the person hears, he must listen to it as if he is hearing it for the first time. He must do this so that the speaker does not feel dispirited.

Even if a person has been permitted to speak, he must not speak unnecessarily. He must allow Hadrat Wālā to do most of the talking so that those who are present in the assembly may have the opportunity of listening more to his words. After all, this is why they came to the assembly. I have personally noticed people becoming fed up when others speak too much. Apart from this act being against the etiquette of an assembly,

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* considers it to be against the path of love.

Do not pose unrelated questions

While Hadrat Wālā is speaking, a person should not interject with rational questions, he should abstain from unrelated questions and must not present any objections. All these things spoil the enjoyment of a talk and the subject matter stops flowing. If a person has to ask something essential about the talk, he may do so in a dignified manner at the end provided he has received permission to address Hadrat Wālā from before hand.

Abstain from unnecessary hand and leg movements

While sitting in the assembly, a person must not move his hands and legs unnecessarily. This is a habit of some people especially those studying Western knowledge. I myself had committed this offence on one occasion. While I was seated, I began shaking my legs. Hadrat Wālā warned me immediately and said: "This is against the etiquette of an assembly. If everyone in this assembly were to shake their legs simultaneously in this manner, it will feel as if an earthquake is taking place. Particular attention must be given to discarding this habit. Apart from it being a useless action, it smacks of imitating free-thinking people."

Do not touch anything

If someone nearby has got a certain item placed in front of him, do not touch it unnecessarily. Some people have a bad habit of touching and playing around with such items. One should also abstain from looking around and observing all the items which are present in the assembly room. This is against the etiquette of an assembly. Special care must be given to abstaining from it.

Etiquette of walking on the road

1. Do not shake hands on the road: Do not shake hands or engage in conversations on the road. If Hadrat Wālā appears before you incidentally, there is no harm in offering salām to him.

2. Do not address anyone from behind: It is most uncultured to address a person from behind. Hadrat Wālā says

in this regard: "Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* advised Hadrat Imām Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* thus: 'If anyone addresses you from behind, you must not respond because he has in fact belittled you and it is as if he considers you to be an animal. Only animals are addressed from behind.'"

3. No one should join unnecessarily: Hadrat Wālā disapproves of anyone joining him unnecessarily while he is walking. This is because a person is no longer free to walk as he wants. Hadrat Wālā was overjoyed when he found a support for this attitude of his in *Tabaqāt Kubrā*. It states that Hadrat Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* would not allow anyone to accompany him while walking on a road.

Apart from the person feeling restricted, another disadvantage of it is that due to requests from his companions, Hadrat Wālā leaves the good level roads for stony and rough paths. It inconveniences him and sometimes his legs slip into the side drains, causing him further harm. When this occurred several times, Hadrat Wālā forced himself to give up this practice. However, acting against one's temperament is discomforting and sometimes a person forgets.

4. No one is to walk behind: Hadrat Wālā dislikes anyone walking behind him. He says: "If I have to stop suddenly – for whatever reason – the person behind me will knock into me."

Hadrat Wālā also disapproves of anyone stopping because of Hadrat Wālā or slowing his pace. He prefers a person to continue at his own pace, and once he reaches Hadrat Wālā, he must move to one side and proceed on his way. Hadrat Wālā is most happy and comforted by this informality. But if a person is too respectful and does not want to move ahead, he may remain behind but at a considerable distance so that Hadrat Wālā does not hear his footsteps. Hearing anyone approaching from behind causes him a lot of anxiety.

In short, a person must not accompany Hadrat Wālā on any path. However, if Hadrat Wālā himself joins a person or starts talking to him, it is another matter. Apart from feeling restricted when a person walks with him, Hadrat Wālā prefers walking alone because it gives him a rest from his many occupations. If people join him in his walks also, when will he get a breather? Consequently, if he is walking or engaged in some form of dhikr and someone disturbs him, he becomes

angry and says: “Do you people not fear Allāh? You cannot give a person any peace!? You do not even allow him to carry out his spiritual practices with peace? You are prepared to surround him when he is walking also? Is there any end to this injustice? Must I remain occupied in your work all the time? Can I not have any time for my own work?”

In most cases, Hadrat Wālā ponders and reflects over difficult and intricate rulings while walking. This is also one of the reasons he does not like to be disturbed. He says occasionally: “Allāh *taʿālā* placed the solution to such and such ruling in my heart while I was walking and passing by the house of such and such person. Such and such matter came to my understanding at such and such place in the field where I was walking. Such and such objection was solved when I was near the lane. I returned immediately to note it down so that I do not forget it. I then went back to complete my Qur'ān recitation [which he had been reciting while walking] and finish my walk.”

There are times when Hadrat Wālā continues working until close to maghrib time. He then proceeds on his path while reading a newspaper or an article. People can see that no time of his goes to waste. If a person is so occupied all the time, he will obviously be displeased by any type of inappropriate or inopportune disturbance. Everyone must therefore bear this in mind. They must not occupy him with their work at the wrong times and places. Anyway, bearing this in mind will not harm them because Hadrat Wālā has set aside specific times to see to everyone's needs. No one's work will remain unfinished. Obviously, if a person feels that he has come after calculating his time and so on, and that his work must be carried out by Hadrat Wālā immediately, then it means that a person who is in need wants to subdue the one on whom he is dependent. No one enjoys such right anywhere.

Etiquette of departure

1. Method of departure: Like the initial meeting on arrival, there is no special time to meet Hadrat Wālā when departing. However, when a person comes to bid him farewell, he must immediately state that he is leaving because mere greeting and shaking hands could mean that the person has just arrived or he is departing. Each meeting has different demands and effects, and could cause confusion and doubt.

2. Do not present any need at the time of departure: A person should not make a request for a taʿwīdh or any other need at the exact time of departure. This must be done much before so that Hadrat Wālā does not experience any restriction due to a lack of time. Some people made such requests when there was no time. Hadrat Wālā expressed his disapproval and refused to accede to the request saying: "This means that whenever you order – whether I have the time or not – I must immediately leave all my other work and carry out your order. Is this how a person with whom you have work must be restricted?"

The consequence of moral degeneration

Hadrat Wālā said: It is very sad to see how much people's character has degenerated. Some people come here and make me feel as if they have come especially to meet me and that they had no other reason. Whereas they had come for their own worldly engagements. I consider them to be my guests and treat them as such. Later on their actual purpose is exposed and I feel very grieved. The evil is that people do not speak clearly and frankly. Their character has degenerated so there is no transparency in their dealings. The reason why they must mention their purpose of coming is that different rules apply to guests and different rules to travellers. Seeing to the needs of a guest is the responsibility of a specific person [the host]. On the other hand, a person who has come for his own work and then stops over is considered to be a traveller and it is the responsibility of everyone to host him."

The prohibition of voicing opinions in an assembly

"I have laid down a rule in the Khānqāh that a person should neither strengthen his friendship with anyone nor make any enemies. At the same time, no one should engage anyone in an assembly where all and sundry voice their opinions. This is the root of all corruption."

How to benefit from the spiritual masters

I feel strongly about seclusion and although it may appear that meeting with the spiritual masters will always be better than seclusion, nowadays I occasionally advise my associates saying: 'Some people are extremely desirous of meeting the spiritual masters. They spend most of their time travelling – going to one spiritual master today and to another one

tomorrow.' I say to them: 'Do not go too much to meet them. Appoint one as your spiritual master and remain attached to him. And do not go too often to him also. Instead, stay with him once for a long time and then remain in your house. You must then go to meet him once a year. Do not even go every month to meet him.'"

Do not go too often to your shaykh

"I say: Do not even go too often to your shaykh. Do not cling to him too much. If you go occasionally at specific times, you will see him occupied in dhikr, you will see him in a state of sedateness and seriousness. This will increase your faith and confidence in him. But if you cling to him all the time, you will see him passing stool sometimes, urinating some times, spitting at other times and sniffing sometimes. This will decrease your confidence in him. Yes, the confidence of intelligent people increases by witnessing these conditions because they will realize that the shaykh is not an angel, he is a human. And since he is not committing sins despite being a human, he is on a level of perfection. As for a person who is dim-witted, he may witness the shaykh arguing and fighting with his wife. This will decrease his confidence in his shaykh. Even if a person's confidence in his shaykh will not decrease, he must still not cling to him because the shaykh too has to keep to his own time-table. If you cling to him too much, he will become agitated and it is most harmful to a seeker to agitate his shaykh. It is most essential to be considerate about when you go to your shaykh. Go to him at a time when your coming will not agitate him."

The practice of the spiritual masters of today

A person came to Hadrat Wālā and said: "Give me a taʿwīdh through which my people may appoint me as their chief." However, the man conveyed this in a manner which Hadrat Wālā did not understand. He asked him several times but the man gave an incomplete reply. Hadrat Wālā eventually understood after quite some time. Hadrat Wālā addressed those who were present saying: "If people go to the spiritual masters just once in one or two years, how can their character be rectified?" He added: "It is sad that even the spiritual masters of today have completely given up reprimanding and scolding people over such matters. This is because if you have to rectify others, you will have to make yourself stern and

unsympathetic. Rectification cannot be realized without this. So most of the spiritual masters think to themselves: 'Why should we become bad?'"

A man is reprimanded for sending repeated messages

Hadrat Wālā said: "An old man came to meet me at my meal time. I was at home at the time. He came to the door and sat down outside. Every time he saw a child going in, he would send a message informing me that he is waiting outside. I continued with my work. My wife said to me: 'This man has been sending messages to you from so long. You ought to go see him.' I replied: 'I have to interact with many people from morning to evening. I do not have so much of mercy in me to leave my work merely to go meet him.' When I eventually completed my work close to zuhr time, I went outside. The man said: 'I need to say something.' I replied: 'I will give you a hearing but first tell me why did you worry about your own need and thereby vexed me by sending messages to me repeatedly? Did you not think that others also have their own needs? If you had a need, could it not wait until zuhr time? Would I have not come out to perform zuhr?'

وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوْا حَتّٰى تَخْرُجَ اِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ

Had they remained patient until you went out to them it would have been better for them.[1]

He became very restless when he heard this and said: 'The Maulwīs must not be like this.' I said: 'Janāb! When did I ever make a claim that I am a Maulwī?' He replied: 'I have been to many Maulwīs and no one spoke to me like this.' I said: 'Very well, at least today you learnt that you must never go to anyone and behave in this manner.' He then left angrily."

Do not cross the limits in reverence

Hadrat Wālā said: "Some people come to meet me and when they leave, they walk backwards. This weighs heavily on me. There is no harm in being slightly respectful, it is a natural response. Excessive reverence corrupts the self and pride enters the person. When I left my job and came from Kānpūr, I used to recoil when people here [in Thānah Bhawan] used to

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[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 5.

say *tum* (you) because I had been hearing the words *āp* and *janāb* (terms of respect when addressing a person) for almost fifteen years [while in Kānpūr]. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had even prohibited anyone from standing for him. He would not sit in a distinguished manner in an assembly so much so that newcomers would have to ask:

Who is Muhammad among you?

Consider innate and Shar'ī limits when attending to a person

At the time of fajr, a seeker brought the musjid water-can and a miswāk, and placed them down so that Hadrat Wālā could use them for ablution. Hadrat Wālā said to the mu'adhdhin, ʿUmar Dīn: "Go and find out who placed this miswāk in the water-can and brought it here?" Upon inquiry, it was learnt that such and such person did. Hadrat Wālā said: "Call him here." When he came, he said to him: "When you are not conversant with the etiquette of service why do you do it? Although you may be doing it out of love for me and out of consideration for my comfort, what is the use of a service which causes me discomfort? Only a few students whose hearts are open to me and are aware of my practices are made to carry out all these tasks. As for those who are living here [in the Khānqāh] and are engaged in dhikr and spiritual practices, I feel ashamed to take any service from them. And when it is done against my likes, it causes me discomfort. This is why I prohibit senior people from serving me. This is the innate harm.

The Sharʿī harm is that the musjid water-can is endowed to the musjid, and everyone has an equal right in using an endowed item. When you unnecessarily brought the miswāk before hand and placed it inside, you restricted its use. Now no one can use it, and this is impermissible. People think that they will get close to me by serving me and they want to make me their deity. I am certainly not pleased by these services. Each person must carry out the task for which he came here and take whatever service he wants from me. There is peace for me in this."

Do not place unnecessary burden on others

A person presented an envelope to Hadrat Wālā and said: "This has been sent by such and such person." Hadrat Wālā looked at it, gave it back to the man and said: "You must return it to him. Why does he not send it himself? What is the need to send it via someone? Why does he place his burden on others?" Hadrat Wālā then addressed the man: "Let me give you some advice. In future, do not convey anyone's salām or message to me. Did you come here to do your work or are you a messenger for others?"

Consideration to travellers and newcomers

A newcomer was sitting near Hadrat Wālā. He got up from there and went and sat at the back with everyone else. Hadrat Wālā asked: "Why did you go sit there? Come sit here near me." The man replied: "The place there is quite restricted." Hadrat Wālā addressed a Maulwī Sāhib: "Why don't you give your place today? You go to the back and give your place to Khān Sāhib. You are always here, you must be considerate towards newcomers. I am always conscious of this. What can I do all alone? No one listens." Hadrat Wālā added: "The "dry" ascetics issued a fatwā saying: 'It is not permissible to give preference to others in gaining proximity to Allāh.' However, the erudite scholars gave an answer to it: 'It is also a way of gaining proximity to Allāh by showing consideration to His servants.' They also said: 'It is an excellent practice among the residents of Makkah to abstain from performing tawāf during the hajj season out of consideration for the travellers. Although it is not obligatory to do this, it is merely permissible, but it provides a lot of ease to travellers.'"

Miscellaneous Principles

This section contains a few miscellaneous principles and also those which apply to the previous sections but were only recalled now.[1]

Principles related to gifts

Hadrat Wālā has many rules, regulations, conditions and prerequisites with regard to gifts. They are all based on

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[1] Principles related to the previous sections were moved to the appropriate sections. (translator)

wisdom, and Sharʿī and rational necessity; and in accordance with the Sunnah, a sound temperament and correct principles.

Hadrat Wālā never accepts a gift unless:

1. He is fully convinced that the gift is given with full sincerity and honesty.
2. The giver is not under any deception about Hadrat Wālā.
3. The acceptance of the gift will not cause any worldly or Dīnī impediment.
4. Neither he nor the person will be belittled in any way.

Once Hadrat Wālā is convinced that the person will consider all the above before giving the gift, then he does not lay down any rules and regulations on him. In fact, he jokingly says: "If such people were to give their entire houses to me, I will not refuse." There are some of Hadrat Wālā's old statements which I [the compiler] myself had compiled in *Husn al-ʿAzīz*. Hadrat Wālā related certain stories and anecdotes within which the etiquette of gifts, and the principles and prerequisites related to them are mentioned together with the wisdoms and underlying reasons behind them. Some are quoted here. Allāh willing, the reader will learn a lot from them, and I will be saved from repetition.

A villager presents molasses

A farmer who lived in a nearby village, Musāwā, brought some molasses as a gift to Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā said to him: "There are many inherited lands in Musāwā." The villager said: "This molasses is not from any inherited land." He added: "The inherited lands do not have sugar cane." Hadrat Wālā said: "But all the produce of the land is mixed." The villager said: "No, it is all separate." He then said: "I do not have any inherited farm." Hadrat Wālā said: "But you just said that the inherited lands do not have sugar cane. Now how can I believe that no farm is inherited? Anyway, I am not so pious as to investigate so much. At the same time, I cannot turn a blind eye to such matters."

Hadrat Wālā then addressed all who were present: "Firstly, a doubt has been created in my heart. Secondly, although Musāwā is right next to Thānah Bhawan, the people there are so far away from Dīn as if it is a village which is 1 000 miles

away from ʿulamā'. No one from there ever comes to enquire anything about Dīn. If anyone does come from there, he comes to give milk, brings molasses, rice and so on. And I do not accept anything from them. I find it most disgraceful to accept anything from a man to whom I cannot benefit in any way. Yes, if a person continually derives Dīnī benefit and occasionally gives me a gift out of love, I will not refuse it because he is, after all, known to me and influenced by me. However, I will accept on condition his intention is solely out of love and no other intention. In fact, he must not even have an intention of reward, although, if he gave it because of our bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, he will certainly be rewarded for it. Look! When a person gives something to his father or son, he does not give it with the intention of reward, but he is still rewarded for it. A Hadīth states that if a person places a morsel of food in his wife's mouth he will be rewarded for it. This, despite the fact that no one does it with the intention of reward. If she comes to know that it was given with the intention of reward, she will feel offended and refuse. She will say: "What do you think, I am your means for acquiring reward?"

Hadrat Wālā then said: "The intention of these people [the villager in this case] is the same which they have when they place sheets over the graves of certain shaykhs and martyrs. They think to themselves: 'If these mullās ['ulamā'] get a share, we will experience blessings and our farms will produce a lot of sugar cane.'"

In short, even the intention in giving is corrupt. Hadrat Wālā then said to the villager: "Brother, had you brought something with love, you would have brought it in the proper manner. Now you must continue coming here for two years and ask about Dīnī matters. Do not bring anything as a gift. Do not come here to give me molasses but to take molasses from me (i.e. to learn about matters of Dīn). Once our bond strengthens, there will be no harm in bringing anything. Even then, you must first ask me permission because if I decide that I am not going to accept a certain gift and tell you so before hand, you will not be so offended as you would in the case where I refuse it after you bring it to me. Keep this in mind at all times."

The villager insisted despite these clear and straightforward words of Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā frowned angrily and said: "To what extent can I not be affected by such a response? I am

a human after all. People say that I am very strict. If anyone were to live with me and observe these actions [of people like this villager], I think they will become more strict than me." When Hadrat Wālā refused to accept the gift, the villager said: "Distribute it among the students."

Hadrat Wālā said in an angry tone: "You have shown how you value students. You feel they are deserving of a despicable item which was rejected here. Well, you ought to know that although the students here may be poor, all thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* they are not such as to fall over every fallen and rejected item." The villager said after some time: "So what should I say?"

To sum up, the villager continued saying things which also offended those who were seated nearby. He finally pointed to a certain person and said: "Okay you tell me what to do?" It was eventually learnt that the molasses was actually ʿushr zakāh.[1] This was the final straw. Hadrat Wālā said: "Look! People unnecessarily label me as a very suspicious person. Although I do not remember past incidents, their effects certainly remain in my heart. Now look! Had I accepted it without questioning him and learnt about the true nature of the item later on, how much it would have offended and displeased me!? Furthermore, the man's zakāh too would not have been fulfilled. All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* for having placed an aversion from the very beginning, after all, this man left no stone unturned to try and convince me to accept it." Hadrat Wālā then quoted the following couplet:

> Your sword is not destined to kill this weak man. After all, there was no shortcoming whatsoever in your merciless heart.

"Could a person have thought of such possibilities? It is solely through Allāh's guidance that the heart experiences these things."

Hadrat Wālā then said in reference to the villager's misunderstandings: "When a person does not adhere to Dīn, he spoils his worldly matters as well. On the other hand, when a person is religious-minded, he has a sound understanding of worldly matters as well, even though he may not be

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[1] Zakāh on one tenth of the produce of the land.

experienced in them. The same effect is found in lawful sustenance. As for unlawful sustenance, it distorts a person's intelligence."

A person said: "The villager said and did these things because he is a villager and does not have sufficient understanding." Hadrat Wālā replied: "The most this can prove is that it was not his fault. If a person commits an offence due to misunderstanding, then although he did it out of misunderstanding, he has certainly caused harm to someone else. If a person stabs another by mistake, then although he is not a criminal, he has certainly injured the other person. If everyone were to bear the ignorant ways of the ignoramuses, their ignorance will never be rectified because if such an attitude [of forbearance and overlooking] is adopted, they will never learn of their ignorance. They will remain uncultured and uncouth forever. This man will never do this to anyone again. Although, based on certain rules, there was a leeway to accept his gift on behalf of the students, it was necessary for me to refuse it for the sake of his rectification. Had I accepted it, he would have thought to himself: 'I took the item and he accepted it.' He will never think of what is lawful and what is not. But now, he has learnt forever how evil an unlawful item is. He has learnt to be cautious about it in the future. He will never be heedless in this regard. If he intends bringing an item in the future, he will take full precautions before bringing it. In short, he has learnt a sufficient lesson forever. Had his actions been overlooked and stomached, no rectification whatsoever of his would have taken place.

A person brings gifts for the first time after pledging bayʿah a long time ago

It was a Thursday the 1st of Jumādā al-Ūlā 1333 A.H. when a person who had pledged bayʿah a long time ago arrived [in Thānah Bhawan] and presented some cash and clothing as gifts. From the time he pledged bayʿah to his arrival on this day, he never wrote any letter to Hadrat Wālā nor did he enquire any Dīnī matter from him. Hadrat Wālā picked up all the items reproachfully, gave it back to the man and said to him in a sharp tone: "Did you make me your shaykh solely to

continue covering me with sheets.[1] You have humiliated me severely. You thought that I will melt just by looking at rupees and fabrics. You think I am a businessman [who is running this entire programme for monetary gain]. Although I am not a pious person, all thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that I am not a materialist. Although I live on this, all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* it is not my way of earning. I find it most disgraceful to accept anything from a person who has not derived any Dīni benefit from me. It gives the impression that I accepted your bayʿah solely for this. People have destroyed Sufism in this way."

"All this corruption has been introduced by the descendents of the shaykhs. They [the descendents] fabricated this ruling that if you go empty handed [to a shaykh] you will return empty handed. They feel you cannot acquire any spiritual benefit if you do not give them anything. They say that if you have nothing to give a shaykh, you should at least present clods of earth for istinjā'. This is the essence of Sufism which they embedded in the minds of the masses. Whatever you have brought at present is in fulfilment of this same custom. You feel you cannot come before me empty handed. I ask you, why has this fervour of love sprung forth only today? If you could not send any letter in the past, you could have sent a gift because many things can be sent via the post. If you could not do that, you could have at least sent a few cents by post. Allāh forbid! I do not mean that you must now start sending these items by post because – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – I also know how to send them back. Had you sent anything by post, I would have most definitely sent it back. However, in such a case the complain that your love gushed forth only when you saw my face would not have been valid."

The man took an oath saying that it was solely love which prompted him. H̲ad̲rat Wālā said: "Enough! Do not take oaths because it shows disrespect to Allāh's name and I will keep quiet when I hear His name. Thereafter, no matter how useless your explanation may be, I will not be able to say anything about it. However, let me assure you that I will accept it even without an oath if you can give me an intelligent answer to my

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[1] Reference is made to the innovation of covering graves with sheets. This practice is done with the intention of pleasing the deceased in the grave.

question and which will convince these four people who are here. Even if I am not convinced by your answer, I promise you that if these four people accept your answer, I will follow them and accept it as well. My question is: 'If you have given this gift solely out of love, what is the reason for not having this love before?"

The man had said previously: "I will act on whatever instruction Hadrat Wālā issues."

Hadrat Wālā said: "Did you ever ask a doctor to prescribe a *munaddij*[1] and continued consuming it for the rest of your life and never considered the need to ask him for a laxative? If you decided that you are going to adhere to just one teaching of mine, what was the need to pledge bay'ah? Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's book, *Irshād Murshid*, is available. My books are also available. You should have studied them and started acting on their teachings. I am also surprised at the fact that during this long period you did not even find the need to inquire about a ruling!? What is the benefit of being such a murīd?"

"This is why I have generally stopped accepting bay'ah. Despite my strictness in this regard, if I accepted a person as a murīd, he must realize that I only accepted after he must have really persisted. Yet this is your attitude?"

When the man was about to depart on the third day, he asked for pardon. Hadrat Wālā replied: "You did not do anything for which you have to ask pardon. However, you will have to make up for the reason for which I did not accept your gift. You will now have to continue corresponding with me. If you are not satisfied, then let me tell you that I have pardoned you." Hadrat Wālā added: "You yourself think with an open mind and tell me if my complaint is valid or not. Not corresponding with me is proof that you are not doing what you are supposed to be doing because when a person does what he has to do, he definitely experiences occasions when he has to ask questions and enquire."

The man then requested that Hadrat Wālā should at least accept the clothing which he brought as a gift. He said: "I had these clothes sewn especially for you solely out of my love for

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[1] A suppurative medicine – one which causes the discharge of pus from a wound or sore.

you." Hadrat Wālā said: "You do have love but it is accompanied by foolishness. One should not make foolish statements. For you to insist despite my refusal means that you want to give me your opinion. Must I follow your opinion or do you have to follow my opinion? It seems like you want to be the shaykh. You must realize that there is wisdom in my refusal as it entails fulfilling the right of one's shaykh. If you think that I refused out of wickedness, then you have not fulfilled the right of your shaykh. It is as if you are asking me to make up for a lost opportunity. But now you have learnt a lesson for the rest of your life because the rule is that a practical warning is never forgotten. A verbal warning is sometimes remembered and sometimes forgotten. How can I pour water over all these advantages by accepting your gift after your second request? How can I allow myself to be materialistic [by accepting your gift] and destroy the Dīn of others in the process? You yourself can understand that I could not have refused without a valid reason when my livelihood is on this. I neither have any business nor any farm. This is my income. Is there any person in this world who dislikes something which comes to him [for free]? If a person dislikes his sustenance coming to him, it will be a serious evil on his part."

Despite this lengthy explanation of Hadrat Wālā, the man said: "I had a pair of sandals made for you. [Accept them as a gift]." Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is similar to someone trying to convince a child to eat. You tell a child to eat some sweetmeat. If it does not eat, you say it must have some rice. If it refuses, you say, okay at least have some milk. Do you think I am a child? It seems you are making a joke of me. You should at least use your intelligence a bit. Anyway, you must correspond with me. Once my heart opens towards you and I see that you are occupied in the task of rectification, there will be no harm in presenting a gift. However, if you ever feel like sending anything, you must first ask me. I promise you that if it is not against my practice, rules and temperament, I will permit you. Do not think that I will refuse forever. Yes, if a gift is against my norm, I will refuse."

The man had brought several items. He had brought a considerable amount of molasses as well. The molasses melted because they had remained outside for quite some time. The man said that it would be difficult for him to take it back.

Hadrat Wālā said: "If you feel like it, you may distribute it among the students." The man accepted happily.

After the man left, Hadrat Wālā said: "I find it very burdensome when a person brings several items as gifts. For example, if he gives me ten rupees at once, I do not find it burdensome. But if he gives me several items to the value of ten rupees, each item has a 'weight' of its own. I have a lot of doubts about such matters. When several items are presented, it means I must appreciate this item, that item, the third item and so on." He added: "Cash money is the best gift because a person can obtain whatever he needs. When I returned from hajj, a person – out of love – wanted to buy sweetmeats for one rupee and invite me. I said: 'What will I do with so much of sweetmeats? If you really want to make me happy, give me the one rupee instead.'"

"The man happily gave me the one rupee. I used it for my expenses. What would I have done with sweetmeats? A person wrote a letter to me seeking permission to send me a pair of shoes as a gift. I wrote back and informed him that I have several pairs of shoes. He wrote again: 'Tell me whatever you would like to have and I will send it to you.' I replied: 'I have to do a lot of mental work. You may buy almonds and send them to me.' He sent me almonds which I ate. Informality of this nature is very good. However, informality of this type only comes after a lot of interaction or after a lot of correspondence."

"On the other hand, this man had not really opened up to me and he had brought a lot of molasses. I am very suspicious in such matters because I have vast experience in this regard. A person who gives large amounts [as gifts] feels that he has fulfilled his rights and there is no need for him to do good deeds. When a person gives large amounts, he has to pay a lot of attention and go into a lot of formalities. What is the need to empty one's entire house?" Hadrat Wālā then smiled and said: "Giving small amounts at a time is also beneficial to a shaykh in his worldly matters. Small amounts which are collected over a period of time amount to a large sum. If people were to give large amounts, those who have very little will not even have the courage to give anything. This is most harmful."

The benefits of strictness, limits and regulations

Hadrat Wālā said in reference to the above person whose gift was refused: "Look! He was the one who came forward and presented the gift on his own accord. Truly speaking, I really feel scared that Allāh *taʿālā* might say to me: 'O you unworthy fellow! We are sending to you and you are refusing?' I am very fearful of this. May Allāh *taʿālā* pardon me.'"

Hadrat Wālā then said: "Even if there was overwhelming love in his gift, there was certainly an adulteration in his intention. He thought to himself: 'I will be eating there, so it will be very embarrassing if I do not give anything.' This is why I stopped the practice of feeding. I offer just one meal, and that too, where I feel it is prudent. I then tell the people to make their own arrangements so that they do not even have such thoughts [of having to give something because they are eating in the Khānqāh]. Yes, there are certain exceptions in this regard."

Hadrat Wālā continues: "The one who has accompanied him has come to become a murīd. However, he will not have the courage to make such a request now because he must be thinking that I am very strict. Even if anyone does not become my murīd, the definite benefit of this is that he will at least learn that it is no ordinary matter to become a murīd. If he goes to any other place, he will certainly keep in mind that there are certain prerequisites for bayʿah. And if he does not have even this much of understanding, those who were present will certainly learn the reality of the path. I want to show to people what the real path is all about. A person has to just bear my strictness and he will see how I will be his servant for the rest of his life."

I [the compiler] said: "Such a detailed teaching of character was probably not taught for a very long time." Hadrat Wālā replied: "Yes. I always say that the 'ulamā' teach the prescribed books [in the Dār al-ʿUlūm] while the Miyājī [a primary teacher] teaches *alif, bā, tā* (the basic alphabets). So the responsibility of teaching *alif, bā, tā* has fallen on my shoulders."

Someone said: "May Allāh *taʿālā* enable this system of yours to proliferate fully." Hadrat Wālā replied: "It seems difficult because if such importance to this system was given in a few more places, there would have been hope. But some other

personalities are against such strictness. They say that if so much of strictness were to be adopted, no one will come. However, each one has his own opinion. I feel that if a strict system is adopted everywhere, people will come in large numbers because where else can they go? I do not pay so much of attention to dhikr and other spiritual exercises as much as I do to character. I do this because character is related to others."

A Maulānā S̱āẖib gives his opinion on a suspicious gift

While speaking about a gift which causes one to become suspicious, a certain Maulānā S̱āẖib said: "What if a gift is accepted in such a situation and then compensated for later on?" H̱aḏrat Wālā replied: "If we were to do this, how will we be able to remember the various gifts? This is more so when my temperament is a very hasty and demanding one. If I have even one cent of a person, my self demands on me to get rid off it as quickly as possible. On one occasion I had taken one rupee from my wife. It occurred to me in the middle of the night that I have to pay it back. I became restless, got up and checked whether she was asleep. She also sleeps very little. She asked: 'What is the matter?' I said: 'Take this one rupee of yours.' She said: 'Glory to Allāh! What is the hurry?' I replied: 'Take it away from me or else I will not get sleep for the rest of the night.' I only fell asleep after I returned her money. Such is my nature. Similarly, when any subject matter comes to my mind at night, I light the lamp immediately, note it down and keep it by my head-side. Only then am I satisfied. It is because of this very same demanding and hasty nature that I sometimes make this supplication to Allāh *ta'ālā*: 'O Allāh! Pardon me without punishing me at all. If not, how will I be able to exercise patience in the punishment? I will be just waiting for Your forgiveness.'"

Caution in giving and receiving

H̱aḏrat Wālā said: "The 'ulamā' have to be extremely cautious in giving and receiving moneys. A person who was of our line of thinking wrote a letter of complaint saying: 'You should not be too strict as regards gifts. You must accept them and spend them on your guests.' A certain Maulwī S̱āẖib said it very well when he said: 'A person who gives such an advice is a fool.' In other words, who unnecessarily takes on two responsibilities, one of receiving and the other of spending.' The man who wrote

this letter did it as a criticism because he was not hosted." Hadrat Wālā then said: "I have certain conditions before accepting gifts. One of them is that the person must have interacted with me for a considerable period of time so that our hearts are fully opened towards each other and informality between us is established. Another condition is that a gift must not be more valuable than his one day's income. For example, if he is earning 15 rupees a month, he must not give a gift which is worth more than half a rupee at once. Thirdly, there must be at least one month's gap between two gifts. Fourthly, he must not make it a strict practice to give specifically at a certain time."

"In the same way, I do not spend unnecessarily. Instead, I store an amount which would suffice for almost a year. I am also not bound to the norms when it comes to treating guests. I will treat each one according to my relationship with him. I call some people to my house and feed them there. To others I send money and tell them to go to the shops and buy food for themselves. To yet others, I give nothing at all. Since my conditions are strict, the income will obviously be less. If I am going to spend freely, my intention will become adulterated and I will not be able to stick to my conditions. A shaykh came to me and complained about falling to debt for 6 000 rupees because of his public kitchen [from which guests and murīds were fed]. He wanted me to intercede on his behalf to a Ra'īs to give him a loan. I asked him: 'Why did you get into this unnecessary debt?' He replied: 'I thought that those who come and have meals at my place will give something in return. But no one gave anything.' I asked: 'How will you pay back the loan which you want now?' He replied: 'My murīds will give me.' I thought to myself in my mind: 'He still expects to get something from his murīds!?' So you see, this is what happens when one spends too much. These are the harms of getting into debts. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, a year's expenses always remain with me and I am at peace about it. The Hadīth also states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to give his wives the full year's expenses to them at once. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* writes that to store a year's expenses does not negate reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. Now I do not hesitate in refusing the biggest of gifts when they are not in line with my conditions. I return gifts which do not fulfil my conditions without any fear or hesitation. I do not even experience any

whisperings about them because I know I already have a year's supply. This brings immense peace."

On one occasion, I [the compiler] saw many guests so I presented a gift to Hadrat Wālā. He replied: "This is an excess (because the gap between my previous gift and the present one was small). However, he accepted it when I insisted. Later on, he returned it via a close relative with the following message: "I felt ashamed to return it at that time because I was worried about your happiness." He added: "Do not consider it to be a return. Instead, Allāh willing, we will see what happens on some other occasion." Later on Hadrat Wālā spoke to me directly and said: "You had given it to me because of the many guests. However, all thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that nowadays I have more than enough. Just as a person is pleased at receiving money, I have now realized that I experience as much joy in spending them [on my guests]."

A stranger's gift is not accepted

A judge had received spiritual training from Hadrat Wālā via correspondence but never got a chance to come and visit him. He sent fifteen rupees to me to convey them on his behalf to Hadrat Wālā as a gift. Hadrat Wālā said: "Since I never met him, I do not know his temperament and disposition. His faith in me developed merely by studying my books. Books are advertisements, and we cannot rely on faith which is based on advertisements. Yes, had he lived with me and observed my actions, and then developed faith in me, it would have been another matter. I feel ashamed to accept a gift from a stranger with whom I am not totally informal. It is possible that he may have a very high opinion of me and after meeting me I do not fill up to his expectations. He will then regret having sent the gift to me."

"A person had asked me a ruling and my reply was contrary to his temperament. He said: 'I served and attended to him for so long, yet he did not help me when I needed him.'" Hadrat Wālā said: "It is because of these reasons that I hesitate from accepting gifts from people like the judge. If he asks, you must write to him and say: 'It is against Hadrat Wālā's practice, he is therefore refusing.' However, you must also add: 'He never refuses any person's gift out of scorn for the person. He values every Muslim, especially the one who is a seeker – he really

values such a person. Please do not feel offended. I will accept it after we get to know each other better.'"

My [the compiler's] request for a meal

My family intended inviting Hadrat Wālā together with a few associates, family members and guests to a meal. Hadrat Wālā stopped us from making such a request and said to me: "Do not live here [in Thānah Bhawan] as a local resident but as a traveller. Cut out invitations completely. Do not invite me to any meal nor anyone else. Even if you can save a single cent, you must do it." (I came to Thānah Bhawan after taking a lengthy unpaid leave and I intend extending it). I said: "I should at least be permitted to invite Hadrat Wālā alone." He replied: "You should not have sought permission in this sitting because there is a different type of imposition at present. If your heart desired, you could have asked me on some other occasion. And if you want to invite me alone, there is no need to give me notice from before hand or to make any special arrangements. You could have done this: If you have prepared something special at home and you feel like feeding it to me out of love, you could place it in a container and send it to me. You could even place two rotīs on top of the container and send them with. There is no need for any special formalities. What is the need to extend a formal invitation and then to make special arrangements to prepare a new dish? I must also add that when you sent some food on such and such date, it was a bit too much. I am living with just my wife, the rest of the people are part of the extended family. You can leave them out whenever you like. If you have to send anything, send only that much which will suffice the two of us while also considering the food which we ourselves have already prepared. In other words, the food which you send must be enough for just one person. If we wish, we will eat all by ourselves, or distribute a little to each of the other family people. You must not send more than what will suffice one person."

Invitation to a meal in Lauhārī

Hadrat Wālā then said: "A friend in Lauhārī invited me to a meal. He took me after a lot of persistence on his side. I thought I will be the only one, I will go and join in the meal. On reaching there I realized that it was an invitation for 50-60 people. This weighed heavily on me but I kept quiet. When I was leaving after the meal, he presented a set of clothes and

ten rupees to me. I asked him: "What are these clothes for?" He replied: "They were made for you on the occasion of the wedding." I asked: "Am I a barber that I must take a set of clothing on the occasion of a wedding?" I also said to him with regard to the money: "I will never accept it. You wasted so much money on the meal, and I felt very bad about eating it. Had I known from before hand, I would not have accepted your invitation."

Hadrat Nānautwī's style of invitation

Hadrat Wālā continued: "The style of invitation of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* really appeals to me. A student invited him. Hadrat Maulānā said: "I will accept on condition it is only the food which you normally receive from the house of that person (the student used to receive his food from a certain person)." The student was bent on inviting Hadrat Maulānā so he was forced to accept this condition. He eventually presented Hadrat Maulānā with exactly the same food which he received. The Maulānā ate it. Hadrat Wālā said: "This approach benefits others as well in the sense that the student was saved from expenses and the fuss of making extra arrangements. It also benefited the student in the sense that since he [Hadrat Nānautwī] was a "cheap shaykh", he will be able to invite many people. Had he been an "expensive shaykh", he would only invite him after having made arrangements for a large number of people. In such a case, it will take several years before he can extend an invitation. On the other hand, if he is a "cheap shaykh", there will be no difficulty at all in inviting him. He will be invited to many places almost every day. The whole year will pass in invitations. I say: The way which is in line with the Sunnah contains nothing but benefit. This way is in total accordance with the Sunnah."

The Sahābah's informal temperament

A Sahābī invited Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. On the way, a person began conversing with him and continued walking along with him. When he reached the host's house, he stopped immediately and said to the host: "Brother, one additional person has joined me. If you permit, he will join us. If not, he will go back." The host permitted him happily. Nowadays, people use this incident wrongly. I explain it as follows. It requires special attention. What people do nowadays

is they summon two or three people, take them along, and in order to protect their "piety", they say to the host: "Brother, I have two or three people with me." They cling to this Hadīth whereas it is totally different. They may have seen Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asking the host, but they did not see how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* developed the temperament and disposition of his Sahābah first. These [pseudo claimants to piety] have not even developed such a temperament. What was the temperament of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*? It was a free, casual and unceremonious temperament.

A Sahābī extends an invitation

I now relate an incident to portray the extent of the casual and free temperament which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had developed in his Companions. It is a great example which is virtually non-existent today. It is related in *Muslim Sharīf* that there was a Persian who used to prepare an excellent gravy. He came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* one day and said: "I have prepared an excellent gravy today. Come and join me." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "I will come on condition ʿĀ'ishah also joins us." He replied: "No, ʿĀ'ishah cannot come." Just ponder. We are talking about Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, the most beloved of his wives. Yet the man refuses with absolute freedom. Who developed and created this temperament in him? It was none other than Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It was based on this very temperament that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had asked his host on behalf of his companion. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* knew fully well that if the man wanted, he would permit him; if not, he would refuse without any hesitation. Where do we find such qualities today? How can we make such a request to a person who is overwhelmed by us and regarding whom we are not sure that if he does not want, he will refuse freely? Even if such a person does give permission, it is definitely not considered according to the Sharīʿah and practising on it is not permissible."

Anyway, the Sahābī says that Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* cannot join them. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "If she cannot come, I too will not come." A person has a right to lay down a condition when extending an

invitation, and the person who is invited also has a right to accept the condition or reject it. In short, both have rights. The Sahābī was so free that when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said no, she will have to join, he did not accept. He continued on his way but came back after going some way. He was brimming with love. He said: "O Rasūlullāh! I have prepared an excellent gravy. You may come and join me." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I will come on condition ʿĀ'ishah also joins us." He replied: "No. ʿĀ'ishah cannot come." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "If she cannot come, I too will not come." The Sahābī went away again. He returned a third time and made the same offer. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gave him the same reply. The Sahābī said: "Very well, if that is your wish, you may bring her along."

When explaining this Hadīth, our Hadrat Maulānā said to us: I have my opinion in this regard: The gravy was probably little and the Sahābī wanted Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to eat to his fill. If Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* were to join in, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would not be able to eat to his fill. Once he gauged that it was really his wish for ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* to join, he agreed eventually. He thought to himself: "My desire is for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to eat to his fill but if he wants to stay slightly hungry [by sharing it with ʿĀ'ishah], so let it be." The order to observe purdah/hijāb had not been revealed as yet. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* walked in front while Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* followed him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had developed this temperament in the person before he could ask.

Any Maulānā Sāhib or Shāh Sāhib who wants to adhere to this Hadīth must first develop this temperament. Without developing it, it is unlawful to seek permission from a host [to bring more people with him]. Even if the host permits, it is unlawful to take any additional people.

The condition of people today

Nowadays people are very careless and indiscriminate in this regard. If a person is invited to a meal, he will take a few others with him. If anyone objects, he responds by saying that he obtained permission from the host. When a host gives a person money to cover the expenses for the journey to where he is

invited and some of the money is left over, then in most cases the person does not even make mention of it. Whereas it was his duty to return it. If not, it is an act of treachery because he is not made owner of it. Rather, it is given to him as a trust to cover his expenses. Even if anyone is particular in this regard, the most he will do is inform the host that this is what the journey cost and this is the amount which is left over. "I will now do as you say." The obvious reply will be for the person to keep the change. This is a serious tribulation. Why did he not return it in the first place? All this evil is as a result of love for the world. Love for wealth has penetrated the veins, and so, the slightest excuse is needed to obtain permissibility. Previously, the fatwā was that things are essentially permissible until their impermissibility is proven. Now the situation is such that we have to say that things are essentially impermissible until their permissibility is proven. This is the fatwā which ought to be issued. Only then will people abstain from the unlawful. Everything is going upside down.

When it comes to gifts, I go to the extent of thinking if the gift was given out of excessive zealous love. Generally, a lack of sincerity is an obstacle to accepting a gift. However, according to me, excessive sincerity is from among the obstacles to accepting a gift because I think that the person does not think anything about giving the gift when he is overtaken by zealous love. Once his zeal settles and calms down, he will become conscious of his budget and think to himself that he gave ten rupees away to the shaykh. This is why when I know that a person is able to give five rupees, I accept only two and half from him. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, despite doing this, I receive a lot. When something is decreed for a person, it is impossible for it to go anywhere else. Our conviction in Allāh *taʿālā* has become spoilt. We think that if we were to return a gift, we will not get it from anywhere else. I say that you will still receive what was decreed for you. And if you do not receive it, it was never decreed for you.

Preference to preservation of Dīn

Hadrat Wālā then said: "The preservation of Dīn cannot be realized without this. Whatever attention people pay to us is because of Dīn. It is therefore most essential for us to maintain the honour of Dīn. If honour of Dīn is not maintained, who will ever bother about us? There was a Khān Sāhib in the village of

Garhī. He was a very old man who used to show a lot of affection to me. Whenever he presented anything to me, I accepted it happily. I used to consider him as a father and feel that whatever he gives me is like my father giving me something. After he passed away, his sons wanted to treat me in the same manner. I refused flatly saying: "I cannot accept anything now because you are like equal brothers to me. I will only accept something from you when I myself give you something." By the will of Allāh *taʿālā*, they were very understanding and cultured. They said: "Very well. Just accept it on this one occasion and we promise you we will never give you anything for the rest of our lives." I accepted it. They never gave me anything again. However, what they do is that they occasionally cook fish and send some to me, or send the meat of an animal which they hunted. There is nothing too serious about this, but Allāh *taʿālā* knows that I feel ashamed. The fact of the matter is that since the Khān S̲āh̲ib was my father's friend, I considered myself to be like his son, and his sons to be my brothers. Had the relationship between us been one of bayʿah, it would have been another matter. Their relationship with me is solely because of my father. This is why they are like my brothers and their position is different."

H̲ad̲rat Wālā added: "Has my income been reduced because of this? I have experienced that on the day I returned a gift, Allāh *taʿālā* ensured that I received one or two more gifts from somewhere or the other. When I return a gift – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – I have full confidence that I will certainly receive something else. It therefore becomes easy to return it."

Strict rules are for Dīnī benefit

H̲ad̲rat Wālā said: "These points may appear very strict at present. However, when people start seeing their benefits after some time, they will value all this. Many have already seen their benefits. I have already informed my associates that when they come here, they must not stick to giving me anything. If not, people will not get the inspiration to meet me for weeks and even years because now they will think that they will only go after having made arrangements to present me with a gift. My present attitude [of laying down strict conditions before accepting gifts] has made it very easy for people to come here whenever they wish. They are free to come even if they do not present me with a gift in their entire lives. People have made it

very difficult for themselves when it comes to eating and feeding. A person who had been a guest at a particular place will count the number of days he spent and estimate how much food he must have eaten. He will then add half a rupee to the total and think to himself that he has to give that amount of money before leaving. This is a despicable situation. I did not even initiate such a system. Apart from a few special people, I do not consider it necessary to feed anyone. In this way, I am at ease and so is the person. What is the need for calculations as if we are partners? Despite this, people still give me something or the other. I feel ashamed to accept, but I do because it is given out of sincerity. In short, may Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with sincerity. Where there is sincerity, the money will come automatically. All that is needed is sincerity."

Adherence to the Sunnah in laying down rules and regulations

Someone said to Hadrat Wālā: "My heart desires to pen down Hadrat Wālā's complete programme so that it is preserved and it will be of real benefit for later generations as well." Hadrat Wālā replied: "This is not my programme, it is the programme of Dīn. I did not invent it. All praise is due to Allāh, I am very conscious about ensuring that the entire programme must not be against the Sunnah and the Sharīʿah. This is a great mercy from Allāh *taʿālā*. There was a certain point which I had in my mind and which I felt was probably against the Sunnah: If a person gave a large amount of money as a gift, although it is not beyond the person's means and there is no defect in his sincerity, I felt it too large an amount and felt it burdensome on me. My heart felt that I should decline it. At the same time, I used to ask myself: What Sharʿī reason is there in declining it? Although I could not fathom any Sharʿī reason [to refuse], I used to decline the amount because it is also difficult to act against one's natural disposition. However, I knew that it was solely a natural excuse having no basis in the Sunnah. I remained in doubt about this for a long time. I considered my self to have failed when I declined to accept such an amount, but I would still decline it. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, my doubt was eventually removed when I came across a Hadīth wherein Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says that if a person offers perfume, do not refuse it because it is not burdensome and it is an item of delight. The reason for not declining is that it is not burdensome. When I read this Hadīth, I said to myself: All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, it has been

established from this Hadīth that finding something naturally burdensome is considered to be a valid and legal reason for refusing a gift. As a precaution, I asked other scholars if this point is really learnt from this Hadīth or not. I did this because I thought that it must not be that my self prompted me to extract this meaning. They agreed with me and said that the Hadīth clearly establishes this point."

A monthly gift from my brother

Hadrat Wālā added: "My brother wanted to set aside a monthly amount for me. He is an intelligent man and wrote to me without any formalities. I wrote back to him: There is a disadvantage in this, viz. at present, I do not rely on any specific person, I rely solely on Allāh *taʿālā*. Even if I do rely on the creation, it is not on any specific creation. If you are going to set aside a monthly amount for me [and send it to me], my eyes will be focussed on Bareilly [Hadrat Wālā's brother was working in Bareilly]. I will start counting the days and think to myself whether March has ended or not, has May ended or not. When it is the first of the month, I will think to myself that you must have received your salary by now, and the rupees are probably on their way to me and will reach me by today. If they do not arrive, I will get worried and think about reasons for the delay. All these conflicts will take place here. At present Allāh *taʿālā* is providing me from places I cannot even imagine. This feeling will no longer be experienced."

"The second point which I wrote is this: 'You must not feel offended by what I am saying. Although your salary is 450 rupees, the needs of a person change. Sometimes, your expenses may be more than 500 rupees. At such a time you will feel burdened because obviously the fervour of love does not remain all the time.' He is a very intelligent man. He wrote back: 'I am most astonished at the fact that I could not realize such an obvious point at the time when I first wrote to you. My eyes opened after I read your letter. Every word of your letter ought to be written in gold. I retract my opinion.' Later on he wrote: 'Others also present gifts to you. Why should I be deprived of this service if my heart desires it?'"

"I wrote back: 'Do others specify as you want to? If you present to me anything without specifying it, I promise you I will accept it.' Subsequently, when I used to go to Bareilly, he would sometimes buy my ticket, give me 20 or 25 rupees, have some

clothes sewn for me, and sometimes he would not give me anything. In most cases, he would not give me anything. He understood my temperament and practised accordingly. This is what love demands. Sometimes I used to intentionally give him a guinea for safekeeping so that he may be convinced that his brother has sufficient."

A good word of advice from the family

Hadrat Wālā said: "My wife made this one point which really appealed to me. She said: 'When you are on a journey, you must have a good appearance. You must wear good clothes, you must wear a new pair of shoes and also carry an extra pair.' I said to her: 'I do not have to show off before anyone.' She replied: 'Actions are judged by intentions. I feel that if people were to see you in a poor condition, they would think that you are experiencing poverty and they ought to give you something. But if they see you wearing good clothes and new shoes, they will think you do not need anything and will not worry about you. If a journey is undertaken while having a good appearance with the intention of not causing Muslims to worry about you then it is an act of worship.' Look at what a fine point she made! When people see me, they will be happy to see that I am living in comfort and will not worry about me. Consequently, when I embark on a journey, I select a few sets of clothing which are in a good condition."

Hadrat Wālā added: "All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* this woman of Allāh does not have any greed whatsoever in her. If not, it would have been difficult to maintain her. If I ever forget my conditions in accepting a gift, she reprimands me and says: 'This is against your practice. Why did you accept it?' She never interceded to accept any gift but certainly reprimanded me on several occasions for accepting." Hadrat Wālā then said: "I am relating all these points to you so that if any of them appeal to you, you may emulate them. A practical instruction is far more effective than an academic instruction. When a person hears stories and incidents, he realizes that such things are certainly happening."

The impressions of a lawyer

"A certain lawyer had come here. He is a very good and religious man. He studied in Aligarh University and was a master there. He holds a B.A. LLB. Degree. He is from the

progeny of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haqq Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. I should not be relating this but even if I do it will not prove any perfection because I am nothing. He said to me: 'There were two things which were lost up to now and were not expressed. I could not even find them in books. One is the principles of Sufism. No one was speaking about them. *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*[1] made this very clear. The second point was discussions on social relationships and dealings. No importance is given to these subjects because people will say to the person who speaks about them: 'What are you doing about it?' All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that this aspect of Dīn which was concealed has now come into the open.'"

Hadrat Wālā's principles are sensible and appropriate

I [the compiler] say: From the above-quoted statements the reader must have clearly gauged Hadrat Wālā's extreme caution in accepting gifts and his high level of independence which stemmed from servitude to Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, all his principles are sensible and supported by proofs.

There are many other incidents related to gifts. I am recalling them as I am narrating the above incidents. However, time and space do not permit me to relate all. I will relate a few short incidents in this regard.

The story of an army man

A person who was most probably employed in the army presented some cash and non-cash items as gifts. The man was a total stranger so Hadrat Wālā – as was his practice – declined in a kind manner by saying: "It is against my practice to accept a gift from someone whom I do not know and with whom there is no informality." The man insisted so Hadrat Wālā explained to him nicely saying: "One should not insist on another to go against his norm." The man still insisted. Hadrat Wālā initially speaks to such people in a kind and affectionate manner. But when the other person starts to offend him, he expresses his own offence in a sharp tone. He says in this regard: "If people only pay heed when I scold them, what must I do? They give me no alternative." Anyway, when the man did not desist from his insistence, Hadrat Wālā said to him: "Look!

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[1] A book which contains letters from seekers who wrote to Hadrat Wālā and his replies to them. (translator)

I am now becoming angry. Take away your things immediately." However, as will be learnt further on, the man had come here with the express intention of forcing Hadrat Wālā to accept his gifts. He therefore did not desist. Hadrat Wālā then became extremely angry and scolded him saying: "Take your things and get away from here." The man picked up his items hastily and proceeded to the musjid.

The man then related his story to me later that day or the next day. He was a simple and ordinary army man. He said: "How will I leave this place and go back? The fact is that when I was leaving, I was having a discussion about these gifts to one of Maulānā's [referring to Hadrat Wālā] murīds. The murīd said to me that Maulānā will never accept my gifts. I said to him: 'Is there such a thing as a person not accepting a gift!? I will certainly give him something and come back.' The murīd said to me: 'If you go there and insist, then remember you will regret it.' What he said proved to be true. I thought to myself that once he [Hadrat Wālā] sees the money and other items, it will be impossible for him to refuse. After all, I never saw a shaykh refusing a gift."

Now you see! This was the reason for the man's insistence. How could Hadrat Wālā's pure heart accept such a gift?

A Ra'īs presents a gift

A Ra'īs who also held a very high position presented 25 rupees. Hadrat Wālā accepted only ten rupees and returned the remaining fifteen saying: "This amount is enough." The Ra'īs departed but his companion remained behind. He expressed his astonishment and asked Hadrat Wālā: "How did you ascertain his intention? Did you receive some inspiration, because his original intention was to give you just ten rupees, but he had said to me: 'I feel ashamed to give just ten rupees.' He therefore added fifteen rupees and presented 25 to you. He felt it against his rank to offer just ten rupees." Hadrat Wālā replied: "No, I did not receive any divine inspiration. Allāh *ta'ālā* steers me. There was a specific reason for accepting ten rupees. My family bought ten rupees worth of firewood at once because it was of a good quality. However, we did not have that amount at the time so it was bought on credit. I feel very burdened by debts so I prayed to Allāh *ta'ālā* to enable me to pay off my debt. When the man presented 25 rupees, I thought to myself that I will not accept them. But then I feared that I

had prayed to Allāh *taʿālā* and if I refuse, it might amount to ingratitude. Allāh *taʿālā* might say to me: 'You had asked for it but when I convey it to you, you put on airs and you refuse.' This is why I took ten rupees from him – the amount for which I had prayed to Allāh *taʿālā* – and returned the remainder."

An amusing incident

Hadrat Wālā relates an amusing incident with regard to gifts. He relates: "A man arrived, and in order to get to know him, I began asking him questions about his journey and the purpose of coming here. But he did not answer any of my questions. This started to annoy me. When his companion noticed this, he said: 'He has so much of love for you that he cannot mention your name even in your absence. He has been writing to you since quite some time.' My displeasure was diffused when I heard this and I excused him. Then after the zuhr salāh he gave me a gift of ten rupees which I accepted because of his previous contact with me. However, no sooner I accepted the money, his mouth opened, and opened to such an extent that he began asking many useless questions. This began to irk me. I thought to myself: 'What is the reason for this? Previously he could not answer my essential questions, and now his mouth has opened so much that he himself is asking questions, and that too, useless questions which are annoying me.' I immediately realized that the rupees caused his mouth to open. Once he gave me the money, he assumed that he was now excluded from all my rules and regulations, and he has the right to ask me whatever he likes without any reservation. I said to him: 'I am not going to answer your questions at present, wait a bit. Let me first return your ten rupees which opened your mouth. After that I will answer those of your questions which I feel need to be answered.' I took out the money and gave it back to him. I then said: 'Very well, I am free and so are you. You may now ask me whatever you wish.' He fell silent once the money went back to him and did not have the courage to ask a single question. I was pleased over the fact that my diagnosis was correct."

An incident with a local resident

Hadrat Wālā also relates the following incident: "There was a man who used to send food to my house periodically. He was having a court case with another person and asked me a ruling in this regard. I wrote an answer according to the rules of

jurisprudence. Incidentally, the answer was against him and in favour of his adversary. He went and complained to others saying: 'Look! I have always been attending to him but now when the need arose, he writes a fatwā against me.' I was most disturbed when I heard about it. I sent a message to him saying: 'If you gave me food and drink occasionally, you certainly ate and drank at my place because there is always a mutual giving and receiving among local residents. Nonetheless, if I am able to estimate whatever you gave me, I am prepared to give you its equivalent in cash.'"

An incident related to an uncouth person

Hadrat Wālā relates the following incident: "Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was my guest on one occasion. Another person was also a guest. When this person finished his meal, he took out one rupee from his pocket and threw it at me. The Maulānā was most displeased and wanted to say something to the man. I respectfully stopped the Maulānā and said: "I will say whatever needs to be said. There is no need for you to take any pain.' I then scolded him severely, expressed my displeasure, returned his rupee to him and said: 'What do you think, I am a cook [who has to be paid]?'"

After relating such incidents, Hadrat Wālā says: "In the beginning I was not so strict about accepting gifts. But when I experienced incidents of this nature, I began taking many precautions."

Maulānā Manfaʿat ʿAlī

Janāb Maulwī Manfaʿat ʿAlī Sāhib (B.A. LLB), a lawyer in Sahāranpūr, related to me that whenever he wished to give a gift to Hadrat Wālā when he was still a student, Hadrat Wālā would decline the gift and say: "You are still a student. At present you have a right over me." Hadrat Wālā added: "If I were to start accepting gifts from everyone, I will be able to construct walls of gold." This was really true. Had Hadrat Wālā accepted gifts openly, he would have an income amounting to hundreds of thousands because Allāh *taʿālā* placed a magnetic attraction in him and conferred him with the quality of being beloved to all.

Etiquette of presenting a gift

Hadrat Wālā also says: "The person giving a gift must do it in private, away from everyone else. In fact, once he hands it over, he must move away from their immediately. On the other hand, the person receiving the gift must mention it to others."

I personally heard Hadrat Wālā making mention of certain large and small gifts in his general assembly. On one occasion he related to us with absolute joy: "A person gave me a quarter rupee, asked me to take one quarter from it and to return three quarters to him. He must have had some calculation in his mind for his own ease. I was most pleased by his informality."

The manner of presenting a gift must not be discomforting

Hadrat Wālā says: "A gift must be presented in a manner which does not cause any inconvenience to the recipient." This is why Hadrat Wālā issued a general prohibition in sending anything via the railway or through messengers. A lot of hardships have to be borne in obtaining the item from the railway office and the workers too have to bear difficulties. On one occasion, a person sent excellent quality melons by rail. The railway officer asked Hadrat Wālā's worker for a bribe. When the worker came and informed Hadrat Wālā he said: "Of what benefit is a gift which causes such hardships and inconvenience?"

Hadrat Wālā therefore sent the waybill back to the person who had sent the melons. The railway officer continued waiting. When he saw that the melons were about to get rotten, he sent a message: "Very well, there is no need to give me any money, come and fetch the melons." However, he was informed that Hadrat Wālā is not going to collect them. The guard then brought them personally, but he was informed that the waybill had been sent back and he must now do whatever the law requires of him. The melons were auctioned. Subsequently, a person related to Hadrat Wālā that many of the railway officers who were Hindus were speaking among themselves and saying: "We have eaten many stolen items but never anything like these melons. Although they were excellent, it seemed as if we were eating excreta." They never stole anything again. When Hadrat Wālā heard this, he said: "These worthless fellows hurt a Muslim's heart, that is why they did not enjoy them." This incident became well known. On another occasion, a new railway officer demanded a bribe, so the old one said to him:

"He never gives any money, do not ask him." No one ever asked for anything after that. However, Hadrat Wālā would himself send something or the other to the person because he was the means of conveying the gifts. But he never gave any money to the officer.

Statements related to gifts

The following statements are quoted from *Ashraf al-Maʿmūlāt.*

1. Three types of gifts: A person from Delhi arrived with some questions on inheritance and wanted to offer something to Hadrat Wālā. He said to the man: "I will not accept it." He added: "Nowadays the things which are given to the pious personalities as gifts can be divided into three categories. (1) Given for worldly reasons. This is a bribe. (2) For reward in the Hereafter. This is charity. (3) As payment for a religious reason, e.g. for issuing a fatwā. I do not accept a gift for any of these three reasons. However, I do accept a gift which is given out of love. I cannot accept a charity because I fall under the category of a rich person. It is not permissible to accept payment for religious reasons. As for bribery, it is unlawful according to everyone. As for the gift which is given solely out of love, it is Sunnah to accept it."

2. Presenting a gift while shaking hands: A person wanted to give a gift at the same time of shaking hands. Hadrat Wālā said: "This method was initiated by the progenies of Sufis in order to conceal the gift. It is against the Sunnah. Nowhere is it established that people used to give gifts to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this way. This custom must be given up. A person's self is corrupted because every time someone shakes hands with him, he will expect to receive something. Shaking hands is a Dīnī act, it is incorrect to attach worldly motives to it."

3. Abstain from humiliating and constraining 'ulamā': A person sent a parcel via rail. The railway officer asked for four ānās[1] as a bribe and refused to give a receipt. Hadrat Wālā said: "We are not going to accept any parcels now. We will return them all. They have come to us as gifts not as transactions. There is no reason for us to tolerate such futile expenses. If anything comes to us without any inconvenience,

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[1] One ānā is one sixteenth of a rupee.

we will accept it, if not, we will return it." Hadrat Wālā also instructed a certain Maulwī Sāhib who was going to print a poster on the subject of guidelines for giving gifts to include the point that no one is to send any parcel to Hadrat Wālā via the railways because it takes away a lot of time. Hadrat Wālā then said to us: "People think that the Maulwīs are only bothered about acquiring food and they will never return anything which comes to them. They treat the 'ulamā' with scorn. A major objective of mine in laying down these rules is that the 'ulamā' must not be denigrated." When any parcels arrived in this way after this, Hadrat Wālā sent the waybill back. This shows that Hadrat Wālā does not have any value for this world and that he has a lot of foresight. He is conscious of the most subtle wisdoms towards which people do not even pay any attention. (The world comes to the people of Allāh but they repulse it).

4. Gifts on Fridays: "I have made a rule not to host people of the surrounding villages and towns on Fridays. I do not accept gifts from anyone on Fridays. In the same way, I do not accept a gift from a newcomer about whom I do not know anything. I have gauged the benefits of doing this from past experiences. Most people used to come to perform the jumu'ah salāh and would unnecessarily remain as guests at my place. This took away a lot of time, so I laid down this rule."

"Yes, if a person has come solely to meet me, he may do so whenever he likes. When I stopped hosting people on Fridays, I stopped accepting gifts from them on this day as well. I did this because it would not be appropriate to stop something which was not to my benefit and continue something which was to my benefit. This is why I stopped accepting gifts together with hosting people. Some people first present a gift and then tell me the work which they have with me. I find this most offensive. If anyone has any work with me, e.g. to take one of my written lectures or a ta'wīdh, he may take it without any formalities. There is no need to give me anything. Do they think this is a shop where a person buys and sells? If anyone gives me a gift and then wants me to do something for him, I do what he wants and then I return the gift to him. Yes, there is no harm in accepting a gift which is given solely out of love. As for an exchange [a gift in exchange for some work], I do not approve of it."

5. The reason for not accepting a gift from a newcomer: "I have made it a practice not to accept a gift from a newcomer. However, if his sincerity is ascertained through circumstances, I accept it. Those who are worshippers of customs feel that if you go empty handed to a shaykh you will return empty handed from him."

I [the compiler] now conclude this section on gifts. The reader must have learnt Hadrat Wālā's principles and preconditions for the acceptance of gifts. Hadrat Wālā's attitude and approach in this regard must surely be very clear now.

Principles related to tabarrukāt

Hadrat Wālā's approach to tabarrukāt

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā is overwhelmed by the oneness and purity of Allāh *taʿālā*. To accord each thing the rank which it deserves and to differentiate objectives from non-objectives are from among his distinguished qualities. These are qualities which are essential in a Mujaddid, reformer and a super-specialist physician of the Muslim ummah (Hakīm al-Ummah). This is why his approach to tabarrukāt is also extremely balanced. He does not deny the blessings of tabarrukāt. In fact, he has witnessed incidents of the blessings of his own tabarrukāt and also of the spiritual masters, and relates them with full confidence. However, he remains focussed on acquiring the actual wealth which the spiritual masters possessed – which enabled their tabarrukāt to have so much of blessings – and encouraged others to try and acquire that wealth as well. He always says: "The fundamental and original tabarrukāt of the spiritual masters is to acquire blessings from their statements, actions and spiritual conditions."

A request to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

When Hadrat Wālā's shaykh and mentor, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu*, wanted to give over his library to Hadrat Wālā out of his extreme love for him, Hadrat Wālā replied with absolute respect and deference: "Hadrat! What is there in the books! Rather give me something from your blessed chest." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was most pleased by this reply, went into a fervour and said: "Yes, indeed. What is there in the books?" Hadrat Wālā quotes the following couplet after relating this incident:

Cast the hundred books and hundred papers in the fire. Illuminate the heart with the light of truth.

Protection from excesses

Hadrat Wālā was not engrossed with tabarrukāt – neither in beliefs nor in practice – like the excesses which people commit nowadays. In fact he was so particular about protecting the masses from excesses that whenever he used to have his hair cut, he would ensure that he buried it. In this way, it could not get into the hands of anyone who would then do unacceptable things with it. He would also not allow his hair to remain with the barber so that he does not start selling it. Hadrat Wālā says: "I personally saw some people who were prepared to sell the hair of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib at high prices to those who had faith in him."

Respect to tabarrukāt

On one occasion, I was present with Hadrat Wālā in Meerut when a person who belonged to the spiritual family presented a piece of cloth which belonged to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to each person in the assembly so he may kiss it and place it against his eyes. Hadrat Wālā said: "I did not like this act of his. It appeared to be deceitful."

Hadrat Wālā also said: "Whatever tabarrukāt of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib which I possessed, I gave them away to people about whom I was convinced that they will keep these items with more respect than my own self. I felt it difficult to be conscious of respect to them and I consoled my heart by saying to myself: 'Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's teachings are sufficient for blessings. If Allāh *ta'ālā* inspires me to act on them, there is no need whatsoever for these material blessings.'"

Hadrat Wālā has a lot of respect for the spiritual masters and intense love for them to the extent that he made this statement on several occasions: "The slightest act of disrespect towards the spiritual masters can result in external and spiritual deprivation." This is why although he is not overly occupied by them, he accords a lot of respect to them.

A person asked him: "Is it permissible to go to relieve one's self while wearing the tabarrukāt of one's shaykh?" Hadrat Wālā replied: "Although it is permissible, it is also not obligatory. It is not essential to carry out every lawful act. My own attitude on

this subject is that when the *jubbah* (cloak) of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which is in Jalālābād – and regarding which I have heard the affirmation of its genuineness from our elders – is brought to Thānah Bhawan, then although it is permissible to stretch one's legs in the direction of the house in which it is placed, in most cases, I do not stretch my legs towards that house out of respect."

The blessed jubbah of Rasūlullāh

Hadrat Wālā went to see the blessed *jubbah* of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with real enthusiasm and yearning by asking its attendants to permit him to see it alone. The attendants moved away, Hadrat Wālā proceeded all alone, had a look at it with full enthusiasm and yearning, and pacified himself in this way. We do not know what emotions must have went through him at the time. They are known to none but him. The following couplet applies:

> Now who has the courage to ask the owner of the orchard as to what the nightingale said, what the flowers heard and what the morning breeze did?

Since the attendants to the *jubbah* were very concerned about Hadrat Wālā's feelings, they permitted him to have a look at it by himself. Normally, they do not allow the *jubbah* to be away from their supervision for a single moment.

The blessing of Hadrat Hājī 'Abdullāh's 'abā

There was a very righteous but ignorant man by the name of Hājī ʿAbdullāh. He had first pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and then to Hadrat Wālā. Hadrat Wālā relates: "He gave me an *ʿabā* which was made of a very ordinary cloth with woollen fibres. I personally experienced the blessings of this garment in the sense that whenever I wore it, I would not even experience any whisperings of disobedience."

Hadrat Wālā says with regard to tabarrukāt: "I do believe in the blessings of items but I consider the excesses of people as regards beliefs and practices related to tabarrukāt to be unlawful."

An easy way of acquiring tabarrukāt

Hadrat Wālā says: "An easy way of acquiring tabarrukāt of the spiritual masters without the latter having to hesitate in this

regard is to give them one of your items as a loan and say to them: 'You may use this item for some time and then return it to me.' I personally saw Hadrat Hājī Sāhib acquiring tabarruk from a Roman Shaykh in the same manner. It really appealed to me. Although tabarrukāt are from the spiritual masters, I am not of their level whereby people can acquire tabarrukāt from me. However, there are some people who make such requests out of love and their noble thoughts about me. If I do not have anything to give them, I inform them of this way [of loaning an item]. This manner is very comforting because I do not have to hesitate in any way."

The way of Hadrat Wālā's attendants

I [the compiler] say: Some of Hadrat Wālā's intelligent attendants do the same thing. When people request, then Hadrat Wālā occasionally gives over his own special items to them. Many people make requests for fabric from Hadrat Wālā for their newborn children. In order to make it easy for him, Hadrat Wālā takes his very old kurtas and cuts them into lengths which will suffice new-born babies. When he is then asked for them, he has no hesitation in handing them over.

Hadrat Wālā's bequest

Hadrat Wālā stated in his will – *al-Istih-dār li al-Ihtidār* – "The items which were used by myself must not be used as tabarrukāt in the manner in which they are normally used. However, if a person – out of his love – becomes its owner in a Shar'ī manner and keeps it secretly with him, I have no objection to it. He must not announce it nor display it to others."

Glory to Allāh! Look at his system, his attention to rectifying the Muslim nation and safeguarding of limits!

I am now concluding this final section on Miscellaneous Principles.

Hadrat Wālā's principles and rules are absolutely rational and balanced

The reader must have gauged from all of Hadrat Wālā's principles and rules as related from *Panj Ganj Ashraf* that every aspect of his was systemised and there was a rational regulation for every matter. If anyone acted against it, he expressed his displeasure. However, Hadrat Wālā would never spy on anyone, but if a person's offence came into the open, he

would not tolerate it. Glory to Allāh! This approach is also in accordance with the Sharīʿah. Unprincipled people consider these principles to be harsh, whereas the entire pure Sharīʿah is a conglomeration of regulations and a system. This has also been the way of the spiritual masters of the past. Hadrat Wālā constantly quotes the proofs of the Sharīʿah and statements of the past personalities to support his practices. He delivers forceful lectures on the Sharʿī and rational need for a proper system and organization. Some of them were presented previously and a few are presented here to serve as examples.

People's criticism of Hadrat Wālā's system

Hadrat Wālā said: Nowadays people do not bother in the least about the comfort and discomfort of others. If a person lays down a system, they label him an authoritarian. You will see that I am very strict in these matters and very particular about a proper system. Some "well-wishers" said many things to me in this regard. One person said it directly in my face: "Your temperament is like the system of the British." How sad! As if there is no system whatsoever in Islam. According to him, Islam is synonymous to disorganization and inefficiency. Instead, had it been said that the British have some system like the Muslims, it could have been correct to a certain extent.

A system is more essential in Dīnī matters

It was the time for ʿasr salāh. A builder who was busy in his construction work asked the mu'adhdhin for permission to call out the adhān. The mu'adhdhin permitted him. Instead of calling out the adhān from the normal place, the builder went onto the roof of the kitchen where Hadrat Wālā's sitting-room was being constructed and called out the adhān from there. When he completed the adhān, Hadrat Wālā called him and asked: "Who gave you permission to call out the adhān?" He replied: "The mu'adhdhin."

Hadrat Wālā called the mu'adhdhin and reprimanded him saying: "Why did you permit him unnecessarily?" Hadrat Wālā then addressed those who were present: "Disorganization inconveniences others and the person himself. Just look from this one incident how many harms were caused. This builder left his work for a certain amount of time while the mu'adhdhin became unconcerned about his responsibility. It is not right to get into the habit of unconcern about one's responsibility. The

local residents have been unnecessarily disorientated. They will think that the adhān will now be called out from the roof and their houses will be exposed to the one standing on the roof. These residents are poor people, they will not say anything out of consideration, but they will certainly be inconvenienced and bothered."

"All these harms were caused because of a change in one's practice and as a result of disorganization. How sad! When it comes to worldly matters, every person has a system to which he pays special attention. But when it comes to Dīnī matters, there is so much disorganization and inefficiency that no system seems to exist. People assume that there is no system and organization in Dīn whereas this is absolutely wrong."

Rasūlullāh had a system for everything

The *Shamā'il Tirmidhī* states:

كان له عتاد في كل شيء

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *had the means for every [essential] matter.*

This stems from consideration and adherence to regulations, and proves his attention to a system. One day, one of his wives made a double fold for his bed. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* got a bit delayed in waking up that night. He said: "Something different was certainly done today." He then instructed for the bed to have just one fold. It is also possible for a person to perform optional salāhs in his bedroom without any proper system. But how can the distinguished task of running the Sultanate be achieved without a system? If there was no system and organization at all in Dīn, did this grand Sultanate come into the hands of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* without a proper system and organization? Never! There is so much of system in Dīn that on one occasion a Sahābī commenced the iqāmah and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* stopped him saying: "The person who called out the adhān has the right of iqāmah" It was also due to his system that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that judges must be from the Ansār and the mu'adhdhins must be from Habashah (i.e. they must be Africans) because they are strong, and their voices are therefore loud.

Hadrat Wālā said: "Every person must have a proper order and system in whatever he does. This will bring comfort to him and to others as well."

The purpose of systems

Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "I laid down all these practices and systems after my lengthy experiences. If anyone knows of better practices and systems than these, he may present them to me. I am prepared to accept them most happily provided I understand them. If not, I will expose the faults which I see in them. If the person then provides me with convincing answers, then – by Allāh – I am prepared to change all my systems. After all, this is not a Sharʿī issue. It has been laid down to make things easy for myself and my friends, and that too after many years of experience. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, I laid down a programme in accordance with the Sharīʿah. After bearing all this in mind that it must be in accordance with the Sharīʿah and also to provide ease and comfort to both parties, and a person presents another programme, I will accept it. People give no proven advice when it comes to practices, but they are prepared to raise objections."

The law and courteousness cannot combine

Hadrat Wālā says: "In most cases, the law and courteousness cannot combine. Although my rules and regulations are considered discourteous, their value will be realized later on and people will hold on to them. In fact, even now when they see harms, they realize the value of my rules and regulations, they use them as references and they think of me. The fact of the matter is that I did not merely think them up. Rather, personal experiences constrained me to adhere to them. Anyone who experiences similar situations will also need rules and regulations of this nature. In fact, I pay a lot of consideration to the ease and comfort of those with whom I interact when I lay down these rules. Others will not be able to take them into consideration."

Spiritual masters of the past adhered to a system

Hadrat Wālā constantly says: "The spiritual masters of the past were so particular about a proper system that there was one master who had laid down the following practice: When a new seeker arrived as a guest, rotī and curry used to be sent to him in proportion. In other words, depending on how many rotīs

were sent to him, the amount of curry was in proportion to it. When the newcomer finished eating, the master would check the remaining curry and number of rotīs to check the proportion which was left over. If the proportion was not the same as when he had sent the food to him, he would say to the newcomer: 'This shows that there is no system in you while my temperament is very systematic. I will therefore not be able to accommodate you. You must go search for another shaykh who has no system in him."

The story of Hadrat Wālā Sultānjī

Two people presented themselves before Hadrat Sultānjī *rahimahullāh* with a view to pledging bay'ah at his hands. The two were talking along and one said to the other: "The pond in the musjid of our hometown is much bigger than the pond here." Sultānjī overheard this and summoned for them immediately. He asked them: "Have you measured both the ponds?" They replied: "We did not measure them but we are making a rough estimate." He said: "How can one rely on an estimate? Why did you make a statement without investigating first? Now go and measure the ponds." The two were filled with fear in case their statement is proven to be incorrect. Anyway, when they reached there and measured the pond, they concluded that it was certainly larger by one span. They were overjoyed at the fact that they were not proven wrong. They returned beaming with success and said: "That pond is certainly bigger." Sultānjī said: "You had said that the pond in your hometown is much bigger than this one. If it is bigger by just one span, can one say that it is much bigger? This shows that you do not have the quality of caution in you. You therefore cannot achieve anything here, you must go elsewhere." The shaykh did not accept their bay'ah.

After relating these incidents, Hadrat Wālā said: "Those elders used to test whoever came to them. I do not even test anyone. Yes, I certainly interact with the person in a manner which exposes all the person's essential and fundamental inclinations."

Hadrat Wālā's principles are supported by the writings of the elders

Many of Hadrat Wālā's principles are supported by the written works of the elders. When Hadrat Wālā used to come across them or hear of them, he would be intensely satisfied and

overjoyed. He says: “Although I did not lay down my principles after referring to different books, all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, through the blessings of the elders, the same points which were practised by the past masters come into my heart. Normally, people are disappointed when they find support from the people of the past because they will no longer be considered to be initiators of a practice. On the other hand, I am overjoyed when I come across such support and I thank Allāh *taʿālā* because I am now satisfied with what I laid down.”

H̲ad̲rat Wālā quotes a lot from *T̲abaqāt Kubrā* – a book from which he is presently selecting extracts – to show how his principles are supported. In short, H̲ad̲rat Wālā’s programme is not something new. Instead, he revived the same old programme which had died and which had become so strange that it was now considered to be a completely new programme.

H̲ad̲rat Wālā’s practices are supported by the writings of Shaykh Akbar

I now present a few practices of H̲ad̲rat Wālā which are supported from the work of Shaykh Akbar *rah̲imahullāh* titled *al-Amr al-Muh̲kam al-Marbūt̲ fī mā Yalzimu Ahlu T̲arīqillāh min ash-Shurūt̲* (the definitive and fixed order as regards the prerequisites which are essential for those treading the path of Allāh).

(1)

ولا معنى الشفقة والرحمة إلا أن تنقذ أخاك من النار إلى الجنة، وتنقله من الجهل إلى العلم، ومن الذم إلى الحمد، ومن النقص إلى الكمال.

There is no meaning for affection and mercy apart from rescuing your brother from the Hell-fire and conveying him to Paradise, from ignorance to knowledge, from dispraise to praise and from imperfection to perfection.

(2)

فلا بد من مؤدبه وهو الأستاذ، فإن هذا الطريق لما كان في غايته الشرف والعزة حفت بالآفات والقواطع والأمور المهلكة من كل جانب، فلا يسلكه إلا شجاع مقدام، ويكون معه دليل علام، وحينئذ نفع القائدة، فعلى الشيخ أن يوفي حق مرتبته وعلى المريد أن يوفي حق طريقه. إعلم أن مقام الشيخوخة ليس هو الغاية، فإن الشيخ أيضا طالب من ربه ما ليس عنده، فإن الله يقول لنبيه عليه السلام: وقل رب زدني علما. فصفته الأستاذ أن يكون عارفا بالخواطر النفسانية

والشيطانية والملكية والربانية، عارفا بالأصل الذي تنبعث منه هذا الخواطر، عارفا بحركاتها الظاهرة. عارفا بما فيها من العلل والأمراض الصارفة عن صحة الوصول إلى عين الحقيقة. عارفا بالأدوية وأعيانها. عارفا بالأزمنة التي تحمل المزيد فيها على استعمالها. عارفا بالأمزجة. عارفا بالعوائق والعلائق الخارجة مثل الوالدين والأولاد والأهل والسلطان. عارفا بسياستهم ويجذب المريد صاحب العلة من أيديهم. هذا كله إذا كان للمريد له رغبة في طريق الله وإن لم يكن له رغبة فلا ينفع.

A seeker is in dire need of someone who disciplines him. He is known as a teacher, muʿallim and shaykh. Since this path is on the highest level of nobility and honour, it is surrounded by calamities, obstacles and an inundation of destructive matters. None can tread this path except the one who is brave, courageous, determined, and steered by an experienced and expert guide. Only then can the benefit of treading this path be realized. This is why it is incumbent on the shaykh to fulfil the responsibility of his role (of disciplining and instructing) and on the murīd to fulfil the rights of the path. Understand well that the rank of being a shaykh is not the ultimate objective because the shaykh is also seeking a rank which he does not have at present. After all, Allāh taʿālā *instructs Rasūlullāh* sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam *to supplicate: "O Allāh! Increase me in knowledge." This is why the qualities of a shaykh and teacher are that he must be fully conversant with inclinations of the self, and also satanic, angelic and divine inclinations and thoughts. Furthermore, he must also know: (1) the source from which these inclinations form, (2) the external movements of these thoughts (in other words, the external manifestations of thoughts), (3) the ailments and defects which would prevent the seeker from reaching the reality, (4) the medications, treatments, conditions and realities of the ailments, (5) the times when the murīd will be able to consume more of the medications, (6) the different temperaments of the murīds, (7) the external contacts and impediments, such as parents, spouses, children and authorities of the murīd, and (8) his management capabilities. The shaykh must be able to rescue the murīd from the clutches of these impediments. All this will only be possible if the murīd has some desire in the path of Allāh* taʿālā. *If he has no desire, he will not benefit in any way.*

(3)

ومن شرط الشيخ أن لا يترك المريد يبرح من منزله البتة إلا بإذنه لحاجة يوجيه فيها.

It is a prerequisite for a shaykh not to allow his murīd to be free to go wherever he likes. He must seek the permission of his shaykh before leaving his house and for the purpose for which he is going out.

(4)

ومن شرطه أن يعاقب المريد على كل هفوة تصدر منه ولا سبيل إلى الصفح عنه في زلة، فإن فعل فلم يوف حق المقام الذي هو فيه، فهو إمام غاشٍ لرعيته غير قائم لحرمة ربه، فإن النبي عليه السلام يقول من أبدى لنا صفحة أقمنا عليه الحد.

One of the prerequisites of a shaykh is to reprimand the murīd for every slip up which he commits and there is no way of overlooking any mistake of his. If he pardons him, he will not be fulfilling his responsibility as a shaykh. Instead, he [the shaykh] will be a ruler who is cheating on his subjects and will not be upholding the sanctity of Allāh taʿālā. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: We will promulgate the penal law on the one who displays his face to us (i.e. the one whose sin is exposed).

(5)

الشيخ إذا لم يكن صاحب ذوق وأخذ الطريق من الكتاب وأفواه الرجال، وقعد يربي به المريد طلبا للمرتبة والرياسة فإنه مهلك لمن تبعه لأنه لا يعرف مورد الطالب ولا مصدره، فلا بد أن يكون عند الشيخ دين الأنبياء، تدبير الأطباء وسياسة الملوك، وحينئذ يقال له أستاذ، ويجب على الشيخ أن لا يقبل مريدا حتى يختبره.

If a shaykh does not have the correct temperament and merely acquired the path [of Sufism] from books and what he heard from people, and seated himself to train and tutor murīds with a view to seeking position and authority, he will destroy whoever follows him. This is because he cannot fathom the starting point and destination of the murīd. It is therefore essential for a shaykh to possess the Dīn of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām*, the planning of physicians and the authority of kings. Only then can he be termed an ustādh. It is incumbent on a shaykh not to accept any murīd without testing him.*

(6)

ومن شرطه أن يحاسب المريد على أنفاسه وحركاته، ويضيق على قدر صدق في اتباعه، فإنه طريق الشدة، ليس للرخاء فيه مدخل، لأن الرخص إنما هي للعامة.

One of the prerequisites of a shaykh is to take stock of every moment of activity and inactivity of his murīd. The more obedient the murīd is, the more strict he must be on him because this is a path of severity; there is no place for leniency in it. Concessions are only for the masses.

(7)

ومتى رأيت الشيخ ترك المريد يستدل عليه في المسائل بالأدلة الشرعية أو العقلية ولا يزجره ويجره عليها، فقد خانه في التربية. والأولى بالشيخ إذا رأى المريد يجنح إلى استعمال عقله في النظريات ولا يرجع إلى رأيه في ما يدله عليه، فليطرده عن منزله، يفسد عليه بقية أصحابه ولا يفلح هو في نفسه. ويجب على الشيخ إذا علم حرمته سقطت من قلب المريد أن يطرده عن منزله بسياسته فإنه أكبر الأعداء، ويجب له الإشتغال بظواهر الشريعة وطريق العبادة في العموم.

When you see a shaykh leaving his murīd free to discuss issues with him through Sharʿī and rational proofs, and he does not reprimand him for doing this, then the shaykh has cheated in the murīd's rectification. When a shaykh sees his murīd resorting to his intelligence on different issues and abstaining from following the opinions of his shaykh, then it is better for the shaykh to expel him from his assembly [or from his Khānqāh] because he will corrupt the minds of his other companions while he himself will not succeed in any way. When a shaykh realizes that respect and awe for him has come out of the heart of his murīd, he must expel him from his place through some strategy because he is his worst enemy. It is incumbent on such a person to occupy himself with the external injunctions of the Sharīʿah and the general forms of worship.

(8)

ويجب على الشيخ أن يكون له وقت مع ربه ولا يتكل على ما حصل له من قوة الحضور.

It is incumbent on a shaykh to set aside a time for himself in which he is in private communion with Allāh taʿālā. *He must not rely on the strength of presence which he has already acquired.*

(9)

ومن شرط الشيخ أن لا يترك مريده يجالس أحدا سوى إخوته الذين معه تحت حكمه، ولا يزور ولا يكلم أحدا في خير ولا شر، ولا يتحدث بما طرأ عليه من كرامة ووارد مع إخوته، ومتى تركه الشيخ يفعل شيئا من هذه الأفعال فقد أساء في حقه.

One of the prerequisites of a shaykh is that he must not allow his murīd to sit with anyone except his brothers in the path who are occupied in the same task under the same shaykh. [The shaykh must advise him] not to visit anyone, not to allow anyone to visit him and not to converse with anyone irrespective of whether it is a good or evil subject. If he experiences any supernatural feat or inspiration, he must not mention it to even his brothers in the path. If the shaykh leaves him to do any of the above, he has defaulted in fulfilling his murīd's right.

(10)

ومن شرطه أن لا يجالس تلاميذه إلا مرة واحدة في اليوم والليلة.

It is essential for a shaykh not to sit more than once a day with his murīds.

(11)

ولا يترك الشيخ المريدين يجتمعون أصلا دونه إلا جمعتهم بحضرته، ومتى تركهم يجتمعون دونه فقد أساء في حقهم.

The shaykh must not permit his murīds to gather among themselves except for in his own assembly. If he permits them to assemble among themselves while he is not there, he has defaulted in fulfilling their right.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, this section – *Panj Ganj Ashraf* – is now concluded. I am also concluding this chapter on Spiritual Instruction with the following conclusion.

Conclusion

My thirty-year service

The statements and instructions of H̲ad̲rat Wālā which were presented as examples in this chapter on Spiritual Instruction certainly do not require any assessment or evaluation. It is like speaking about the high qualities of musk before a perfumer. This is especially so if it is done by a novice like myself who is nothing but a copier. How can I ever give my opinions!?

However, I can definitely say that although this sinful, ill-mannered and heedless fellow never had the inspiration of practising strictly on the statements and instructions of Hadrat Wālā, I had – during this thirty-year service – the opportunity of hearing such facts and sciences which made the path absolutely clear to me. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. Whether I tread the path or not is another matter, but the truth has been made as clear as the light of day. Whether one accepts it or not, during this thirty-year period, the correctness of the following couplet is established without any exaggeration through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the focus of Hadrat Wālā:

> After thirty years it became clear to Khāqānī that a single moment in Allāh's remembrance is better than the kingdom of Hadrat Sulaymān *ʿalayhis salām*.

Whether one is inspired or not is another matter. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with sound understanding and the inspiration to practise through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā. May He save us from the plots of the self and Satan, keep us away from every deviation and misguidance and convey us to our Real Objective [Allāh *taʿālā*]. Āmīn.

In short, I am merely a narrator of Hadrat Wālā's statements. May Allāh *taʿālā* – through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā – give sight to this blind fellow, and may He enable me to witness that treasured splendour. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Revival of Dīn

By the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā did not leave any department of Dīn without having fully investigated and researched it. This is especially so with regard to Sufism where not a single essential part was left concealed or ambiguous, and which was not fully analysed by Hadrat Wālā through his writings, statements and conditions. All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā made the path of Dīn so clear that there is no reason for any seeker of the truth to remain confused. The veils of fabricated customs and innovations which were covering the truths were lifted by Hadrat Wālā and he displayed Dīn in its pristine purity. The doors of rectification of character which had been shut for centuries were opened in these worst of times by Allāh *taʿālā* at the hands of Hadrat Wālā. The precedence of fabricated customs and innovations

had completely concealed and adulterated the realities of the Sharīʿah and Sufism, people were immersed in superfluous actions which caused them to go thousands of miles off the course of the true path. In short, confusion reigned and there was a severe need for the revival of Dīn. The mercy of Allāh *taʿālā* was directed towards the Ummah and this need was fulfilled at the hands of Hakīm al-Ummah. All praise is due solely to Allāh *taʿālā*.

By the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā removed the murkiness which existed in all departments of Dīn – especially of Sufism – and in so doing, separated the milk from the water. He made all the essentials of Dīn so crystal clear that now – Allāh willing – the seekers of the Dīn will have no difficulty in searching for the truth for many centuries to come.

Hadrat Wālā's revivalist teachings are sufficient for two centuries

I recall the statement of a distinguished person at this point. There was an assembly of Hadrat Wālā's associates. They were all expressing their extreme sorrow over the fact that they cannot seem to see anyone on the level of Hadrat Wālā. The person said: "What is the need to even worry about it? By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā has prepared such a pot and placed it before everyone that – Allāh willing – no one will have to worry for at least two hundred years. All he has to do is dish out the cooked food from that pot and continue eating."

A special type of tranquillity enveloped everyone who was present and the grief was replaced by relief.

Glory to Allāh! The man was certainly correct because through the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā has so thoroughly cleaned the path to Dīn and reaching Allāh *taʿālā* and removed all dirt and grime from it, that the seekers will experience no hardship in treading the path for many centuries. They will be able to reach their Real Objective very easily. I recall an incident which occurred just today – 16 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1354 A.H. Hadrat Wālā related the gist of a seeker's correspondence. He first sought permission to come to Hadrat Wālā, as per Hadrat Wālā's practice, he asked him the reason for wanting to come. The man replied: "To acquire spiritual blessings." Hadrat Wālā wrote back and asked: "What if you do not acquire spiritual blessings?" The man replied: "I have no complaint even if I do not acquire any spiritual blessings. I will be pleased by the will

and decree of Allāh *taʿālā*.” Today Hadrat Wālā wrote back to him: “Very well, tell me what do you consider to be spiritual blessings?”

After relating the gist of the above, Hadrat Wālā addressed those who were present in the assembly: “I do not want any matter to be left cloudy. It must become absolutely crystal clear. There must not be a single pebble, rock, incline or decline on the path. It must be absolutely smooth and level. A person must be able to shut his eyes and continue moving without any obstacle. Unfortunately, this is my “crime” for which I have been maligned and due to which I have been accused of being too harsh.”

A total exposition of the tricks of the self

Hadrat Wālā exposed such subtle tricks of the self which were concealed from many senior masters. There was general inattention to them, thus resulting in deprivation from a complete rectification of the self. Many senior masters had to acknowledge this feat of Hadrat Wālā. Even if a person having the slightest affinity with the path was to closely examine Hadrat Wālā’s themes related to rectification, he too will have to make the same acknowledgement. The reader too must have affirmed this after reading the present chapter.

Dreams of the righteous

I recall a true dream of a scholar who was a spiritual master himself and had pledged bayʿah to another shaykh of the same spiritual lineage. He saw Hadrat Hājī Sāhib saying to him in a dream: “You have certainly acquired spiritual affinity. However, if you desire rectification of your character, you must revert to Maulwī Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib.”

Many seekers received similar unseen instructions through true dreams and many continue receiving them to this day.

The secret behind Hadrat Wālā’s fine sight

The secret behind Hadrat Wālā’s fine sight in the field of rectification is that he himself keeps a fine and critical sight on his own self all the time, and monitors its ups and downs. This is why he is so proficient in assessing the ups and downs of the self, and the fluctuations in human emotions. He says: “It is very difficult for anyone to conceal the thievery of his self from me because I have a lot of experience with the ups and downs

of the self and am well-versed with the fluctuations of the heart."

Hadrat Wālā's fine temperament and excessive dhikr

First of all, Allāh *taʿālā* created Hadrat Wālā with a very fine temperament and with a very high level of perception. Those who have observed him know fully well that he is the Hadrat Mirzā Jān Jānā *rahimahullāh* of his time as regards his fine temperament, perceptiveness and fastidiousness. His excessive dhikr has fine-tuned this natural disposition even more. This is why he can immediately perceive every good and bad thing. While conversing one day, he said: "My nature is such that a good thing has an immediate effect on me. The same can be said of a bad thing. However, it is an immense grace of Allāh *taʿālā* that I have a natural aversion towards bad things. This is why I stay away from them."

I [the compiler] say: A sound disposition and fine perception are the causes of this. It is essential for people of such sound disposition and fine perception to be averse to evils because the slightest incidental obscurity can have an effect on them. This obscurity could lead to pain, then to averseness and then to petrifaction.

Expertise in diagnosing ailments of the self

This world is a conglomeration of good and evil – every type of good and evil has to be seen and heard, perceptions differ and inclinations are diverse. A personality having a perceptive disposition as that of Hadrat Wālā is therefore an expert at identifying, diagnosing and treating all the intricacies of the self and all the changes and fluctuations which take place in the heart. Such an expert can easily catch out the subtlest of thieveries of people. This is an explanation of the statement which Hadrat Wālā made above: "It is very difficult for anyone to conceal the thievery of his self from me because I have a lot of experience with the ups and downs of the self and am well-versed with the fluctuations of the heart."

There are countless incidents which testify to the correctness of this statement. A person wrote about the death of his daughter-in-law. The manner and tone in which the man expressed his grief immediately made Hadrat Wālā to suspect that the man had been lustfully desiring his daughter-in-law.

The man could not deny it when Hadrat Wālā questioned him about it.

Hadrat Wālā says: "When a seeker comes to me, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I can – in most cases – assess the overall condition of his self from his speech and demeanour. From this I know what type of treatment to mete out to him."

Each person is treated according to his condition

I [the compiler] say: I certainly observe this all the time. The manner in which Hadrat Wālā treats a person is most certainly proved to be the correct treatment for him. This, notwithstanding the fact that other observers may even feel astonished.

Quite some time back a youngster came to Hadrat Wālā and requested bayʿah with much faith. Hadrat Wālā did not disregard him but deferred him in a formal way by saying: "I want you to study *Islāh ar-Rusūm* and then decide." Out of my concern for the youngster, I purchased a copy of this book with my money and gave it to him. He looked at the book and went away. Later on it was learnt that he had become angry with his father and fled from there. Hadrat Wālā issued a warning to me by saying: "When I treat a person in a particular manner, I do not like anyone to interfere." He then went into a lengthy explanation to me on the subject of Allāh *taʿālā* conferring understanding to a person for the task to which He appoints him. Hadrat Wālā said: "Allāh *taʿālā* appointed me to the task of training and rectification. This is why He also conferred me with its true recognition – how each person must be treated, who is a genuine seeker and who is not. If a person is not a genuine seeker, my heart does not accept him at all. It rejects him immediately although I do not even have full details about his heart at the time. If a person eats a fly by mistake, although he does not have knowledge of it at the time of eating it, the stomach recognizes it very well and never accepts it – it expels it immediately."

Hadrat Wālā's proficient diagnosis

The above incidents were related to perceptions. They affirm my statement when I said that Hadrat Wālā is a treasure house of perceptions and emotions. He is so intuitive that even the greatest of psychologists cannot compare with him. I just recalled an incident in this regard. Recently a police officer

wrote to Hadrat Wālā complaining about his wife who was constantly fighting with him and demanding on him to bring more money and to even accept bribes because they need the money for their son's wedding. He added: "I am severely distressed by the daily pressures from my wife and the constant fighting and arguing. I fear I may take an evil decision. I request your prayers and advice."

Hadrat Wālā wrote back and, while making reference to the "evil decision" (he was referring to separating from his wife), said: "You must not do this. You might bring more problems on yourself. As for the advice which you want from me, that you can get from experienced people. As for me, I am a manifestation of the following couplet:

> The one behind the curtain was right when she said with reference to a person who does not possess intelligence, courage, understanding and the power to think: "There is no one in the house."

However, instead of experience, I do have emotions and feelings, and I can give you my opinion on the basis of my feelings. When she is fighting and arguing with you, consider her to be a starling who is imitating Satan and view the episode as an amusement. There will be no anger."

The above reply proved most beneficial to the police officer. He wrote back and informed Hadrat Wālā saying: "Your advice brought a lot of peace. Hadrat Wālā really did say something very unique about women when he referred to them as the starlings of Satan. If one ponders over this statement deeply, many complexities are solved, apprehensions are removed and the anger which I was experiencing over her actions is not experienced when I think of Hadrat Wālā's statement. By Allāh! You made an excellent observation. I thoroughly enjoyed it and the anger which I felt towards her has been replaced by mercy."

Hadrat Wālā wrote back: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* you benefited from it."

Hadrat Wālā then addressed me: "It is solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* that people derive immense benefit from small statements. Words in themselves do not have so much of effect [it is from Allāh *taʿālā*]. If mere words were so effective, note them down and see if the same effect is experienced." Hadrat Wālā then quoted the following couplet:

O you lazy fellow! Why are you jealous of Hāfiz? The capabilities in his disposition and the excellence in his speech are bestowals from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Total expertise in internal training and spiritual treatment

By virtue of the fact that Hadrat Wālā is blessed with a very fine temperament and sharp perception, he can fully comprehend every type of emotion, feeling and perception. This is why he has – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* - total expertise in internal training and the treatment of spiritual maladies. This is observed and accepted by all, and is affirmed by the world when it accorded him the title of Hakīm al-Ummah. In fact, if we were to examine closely, one will realize that the vast amounts of facts and sciences about the path, and the intricate and fine points on rectification which emanate from his tongue and pen are by and large the effects of his own conditions and impressions. Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

O friends! Listen to this story. This condition which is experienced at present is in fact the reality.

If you follow my present condition, you will find its benefit in this world and in the Hereafter.

If we look deeper, we will conclude that Hadrat Wālā is fully occupied in his own purification. The different conditions which he experiences in the course of it and the experience which he gains are used as means for the training and rectification of others.

Consequently, when he delivers fervent talks on lofty conditions and the ways of rectification, those who have the aptitude are able to perceive that Hadrat Wālā is explaining his own conditions. Sometimes, he even states this clearly because he is naturally very simple and straightforward. Whenever he feels the need or whenever wisdom demands it, he unhesitatingly mentions his own good qualities and also the impositions of his self. He says on such occasions: “I am neither too humble nor proud. I speak the truth and I speak what is in my mind. I am naturally simple and straightforward. As a result, I have a free mind which is the effect of that

Majdhūb through whose prayers I was born.[1] The companionship of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* strengthened these qualities further because he himself was a very simple person. He would freely relate and mention his special qualities and shortcomings before all – even to his students and disciples."

Hadrat Wālā said this on numerous occasions: "Although I am not a pious person, all praise is due to Allāh I am not heedless of my rectification. I am always on the watch and say to myself: 'I have to change that particular condition in this way, and that particular defect must be rectified in this way.' In short, I am not satisfied with any condition.'"

Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Wālā's practice is totally in line with the following couplet of Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh*:

> Continue digging and searching in this path. Do not take a rest for a single moment until your last breath.

Even today, Hadrat Wālā compiled a couplet which he asked someone to write with a broad pen on a thick board. He placed it on his desk so that it can serve as a constant reminder. The couplet is:

> Engage in excessive dhikr. Speak less. Remain silent when your disposition is excited.

When I asked Hadrat Wālā for this board so that I may copy the above couplet, he said: "Indeed. There are many concerns but I get the inspiration to carry them out sometimes and do not at other times."

Similarly, there was a time when he used to deliver talks and lectures. He said during that time: "When I find any matter within me which needs to be rectified, I deliver a talk on that subject. I benefit a lot from it. My talk on anger was delivered with the same objective." He also said: "Allāh *taʿālā* places such cures in the heart for many major spiritual ailments, and in this way they are rectified by Allāh's grace."

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[1] Refer to the beginning of the book where Hadrat Wālā's birth is described.

On the reverse of the same above-mentioned board, Hadrat Wālā had a calligrapher to write something which would serve as a reminder. It is quoted here:

1. Do not speak directly to a person who erred. Speak through an intermediary who is intelligent.
2. Instead of telling him yourself, ask him simple questions which would make him admit his error on his own. If he does not understand, end the conversation by informing him that there is no affinity between the two of you.
3. Continue prompting him to provide ways of making up for his error.
4. If possible, stipulate a slightly lighter form of redemption than the one suggested by him.
5. As a precaution, wait a bit and re-examine the situation before asking him to carry out your instructions.

Hadrat Wālā's journey to Delhi and Pānīpat

I recall another incident which portrays how Hadrat Wālā used to supervise and examine his self. Janāb Maulwī ʿAbd al-Karīm Sāhib Gumthalwī personally related to me that he was with Hadrat Wālā on a journey. They were to travel from Nārnaul to Alaur, Alaur to Delhi and Delhi to Pānīpat. They performed jumuʿah in Nārnaul and spent the night there. Hadrat Wālā wanted to change his clothes at tahajjud time. The Maulwī Sāhib in whose charge was Hadrat Wālā's bag, took out a set of clothes and gave them to him. The kurtah had chikan[1] work on it. Hadrat Wālā said: "No. Bring the muslin kurtah." When he brought the muslin kurtah, Hadrat Wālā said: "Okay, you rather bring the chikan kurtah and keep this away." When he brought the chikan kurtah again, Hadrat Wālā said: "Do you know why I did this? When you brought the chikan kurtah, I thought to myself: This is a town, it will suffice to wear a muslin kurtah. After this, we will be going to Delhi, and a chikan kurtah for Delhi will suffice (because it will not be a cause of scorn before senior people and leaders). However, I acted against this thought [and asked you to bring the chikan kurtah]."

[1] A special type of embroidery peculiar to the Lucknow area.

Anyway, this incident passed. After spending the night in Alaur, we proceeded to Delhi. His clothes had become quite dirty during this period, so when they were preparing to leave Alaur for Delhi, the Maulwī Sāhib asked whether he wanted to change his clothes. But Hadrat Wālā deferred it. The Maulwī Sāhib asked again in the train, but Hadrat Wālā deferred it again by saying he will change later on. They eventually reached Delhi and he still did not change them. While in Delhi also he did not change his clothes although they had become extremely dirty by now. When they left Delhi and reached Pānīpat, Hadrat Wālā took a bath immediately on his arrival and changed his clothes because he – due to his fastidious temperament – is very much disturbed by dirty clothes. We see to what extremes he went to make up for his thought [that it will not be a cause of scorn before senior people and leaders].

Glory to Allāh! This is the exact Sunnah of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. We read in the traditions how Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* removed his attractive garments and wore his ordinary clothes on the occasion of his entry into Bayt al-Maqdis as a conqueror, and how Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* cut one of the sleeves of his kurtah in order to make it appear unsightly.

Another incident portraying Hadrat Wālā's supervision of his self

I recall another incident. Quite some time back a man sent 500 rupees from someone's inheritance and requested that the money be spent for good and charitable purposes. Since the man had not obtained permission from Hadrat Wālā to send this money, he sent it back as was his norm. The man then wrote a letter in which he sought permission, apologized and provided full details. Hadrat Wālā also learnt from the letter that the permission of a few heirs was not obtained although permission was obtained for a major portion of the amount. Hadrat Wālā sent back a total prohibition saying: "Since the permission of certain heirs has not been obtained, you must not send the money." Later on Hadrat Wālā related this incident in his general assembly and said: "At the time when I was writing a total prohibition, I thought to my self that I should permit him to send the amount for which he obtained permission from all the heirs. It will be good because it would be of benefit to the poor. However, I said to my self: 'I see! You want to advise your teacher as well!?'"

Constant supervision of the self

Hadrat Wālā used the word "teacher" in the above incident. It is totally in line with the reality because he is fully aware of the deceptions of the self and understands its justifications very well. It is his night and day job to continually warn the seekers of their deceptive and conniving self. He does not confine himself to supervising the selves of the seekers alone. Rather, he constantly checks on his own self. The reader must have gauged this from the above-related incidents. He endeavours to the utmost not to give the self any opportunity of rising. He constantly watches it so that the slightest mark of a change does not develop in it.

Hadrat Wālā says: "If my wife happens to go anywhere, and there is any non-mahram woman in the house – whether a relative, guest, worker or girl – I give up going to my house during that period. If I have to say or listen to something really important, I stand on the porch and do it. I do not enter my house. I am relating this point to others so that they may take extreme precautions in this regard because, first of all, we cannot rely at all on the self. Secondly, it is also essential for us to keep our thoughts pure. In fact, we must also be cautious with minor non-mahram girls. Sometimes a person passes his hand over the head of a minor girl. This is done solely out of affection. But after passing the hand over the head for a short while, the self begins to have mixed up thoughts. I find that people are generally unmindful of these fine points. They are always under the assumption of affection [and continue passing their hands over such girls]. It is obligatory to be cautious in this regard."

Similarly, Hadrat Wālā said on one occasion: "I do not permit a young boy to sit in seclusion with me. Although this matter may appear insignificant, it is a very impressionable thing for the person who has faith and confidence in me. When he sees me taking such measures, he will think to himself: 'If he takes so much of precautions in safeguarding his self despite being a shaykh, we have to be even more cautious."

Continuous progress

The essence of whatever I said is that Hadrat Wālā is still constantly keeping a check on his self. Based on his continuous striving, he is progressing continuously. This is a

progress which is continuing all the time and which is generally not known. These are those internal actions regarding which Hadrat Wālā says: “They convey a seeker from one level to another without anyone knowing about it. Such a person is known as a Qalandar. He does not pay as much attention to optional acts of worship as he does to his heart and actions of the heart. For example, when he experiences an incident, his heart immediately connects him to Allāh *taʿālā* through patience, gratitude, submission, servitude and so on. This becomes a spiritual action of its own and is of such a level that it conveys the person from one point to another very elevated point. Since incidents are experienced all the time and the person is keeping a check on his heart constantly, he is making spiritual progress all the time. He surpasses the one who, although he is occupied with optional acts, does not pay too much attention to the supervision of his heart.”

Keeping a check on one's conditions for the continuity of spiritual affinity

I [the compiler] say: Let alone progress, even the continuity of spiritual affinity requires constant supervision of the heart – as is the practice of Hadrat Wālā. This is also supported by a teaching of Hadrat Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh*. In his book *al-Amr al-Muhkam al-Marbūt fī mā Yalzimu Ahlu Tarīqillāh min ash-Shurūt* (the definitive and fixed order as regards the prerequisites which are essential for those treading the path of Allāh), he emphasises on the spiritual masters to constantly keep themselves in check. In this regard, it is also obligatory on a shaykh to set aside some time for seclusion with Allāh *taʿālā*. He writes:

فمتى لم ينفقد الشيخ حاله في كل يوم بالأمر الذي حصل له به هذا تمكين كان مخدوعا بحيث أن نسترقه العادة ويجره الطبع ويريد الخلوة ساعة فتفقد الأنس ويجد الوحشة، وكذلك في توكله وادخاره في كل حال اكتسبته النفس مما لم تفطر عليه لأنه سريع الذهاب وقد رأينا شيوخا سقطوا، نسأل الله لنا ولهم العافية. قال الله تعالى: إن الإنسان خلق هلوعا، إذا مسه الشر جزوعا، وإذا مسه الخير منوعا. فقد جمع في هذه الآية كل رذيلة في النفس وأبان فيها أن الفضائل ملتبسة لها ليست في جبلها، فالتحفظ واجب.

If a shaykh does not supervise his conditions in a manner through which he can acquire steadfastness (i.e. the practice of continuous obedience and excessive dhikr), he may very well fall

into deception. His disposition and old habits will gradually draw him to themselves. Consequently, even if he wants to remain in solitude, he will not have affinity with it. In fact, he will recoil from solitude. The same applies to all those conditions which are not in line with the disposition and nature of the self. He must not rely on the acquisition of those conditions because they disappear very quickly. We saw many spiritual masters falling from their position. We ask Allāh taʿālā *for wellness for them and us. Āmīn. Allāh* taʿālā *says: "Surely man is created with a restless disposition. When misfortune befalls him, he is impatient."*[1] *Allāh* taʿālā *combined all the evils of the self in this verse and explained that the virtues which the self has are not inherent to it. It is therefore obligatory to preserve them.*

Hadrat Shaykh Abū Madyan

I recall a statement which Hadrat Wālā quoted to us of Hadrat Shaykh Abū Madyan Maghribī *rahimahullāh* who was one of the mentors of Hadrat Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh*. It is quoted in *Tabaqāt Kubrā*. It is appropriate to our subject and supports what we said. It is quoted verbatim from Hadrat Wālā's *Intikhāb Tabaqāt Kubrā*:

كل فقير لا يعرف زيادته ونقصه في كل نفس فليس بفقير

A dervish who does not perceive his (spiritual) increase and decrease all the time is not a dervish.

Unseen supervision

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, this is a continuous and permanent condition of Hadrat Wālā which is continually exposed through his words, actions and conditions. Apart from the above-related incidents, I can easily recall a few other incidents. They are presented in brief. I related my own spiritual restlessness to Hadrat Wālā on one occasion. As was his practice, he immediately consoled me completely with a most impressive theme. He then said in a tone of absolute remorse: "You are relating your condition to me and getting yourself consoled and comforted. If I experience any anxiety, who can I go to for consolation?" He added: "All praise is due to Allāh that He Himself guides and steers me on such occasions and unties my knots."

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[1] Sūrah al-Maʿārij, 70: 19-20.

Constant imposition on the self

On one occasion he heard about a shaykh who makes his murīds to engage in dhikr for two hours at a time but they [the murīds] are totally free as regards their dress, appearance and other matters. They do not confine to the Sharīʿah in this regard. Hadrat Wālā said: "What is so difficult about striving for an hour, two hours or even four hours? Only that person must come to me who wants to impose on his self night and day [all the time]."

This shows that it is in itself the condition of Hadrat Wālā, i.e. he keeps his self in check all the time and emphasises this point on his associates.

A person is attracted to beauty

A scholar was overwhelmed by his worship of beauty. Hadrat Wālā instructed him to abstain by saying: "You must not look [at women] even if you have to lose your life in the process." The man had written: "I am so overcome by my attraction towards beauty that I am even very fastidious about placing ordinary items in a well-arranged and systematic way. In the same way, I am extremely attracted to beautiful women." Hadrat Wālā replied in very eloquent Arabic:

بعضه خير فاشكروا عليها، وبعضه شر فانصبروا عنها، أي غضوا البصر حيث أمر الشارع بالغض ولو بتكلف شديد يحتمل ذهوق الروح، فإن الله تعالى غيور وتشتد غيرته على النظر إلى ما نهى الله أن ينظر إليه، فالحذر الحذر أن يسخط المحبوب الأكبر.

Some of it is good, so be grateful for it. Some of it is bad, so lower your gaze wherever the Sharīʿah orders you to lower your gaze even if it means imposing severely on the self to the extent of destroying it. Allāh taʿālā *abhors it when an inviolable act is committed, and He abhors it most when a person looks at something which He prohibited him to look at. So beware! Beware of bringing on the wrath of the Greatest Beloved.*

Look at the severity with which Hadrat Wālā prohibited the man!

Hadrat Wālā also says: "This path contains 'chickpeas of steel' which they have to chew on for the rest of their lives, and it is as if the birth is stopped."

The fruits of spiritual striving

Although Hadrat Wālā does not impose external striving and exertion, a person certainly has to keep himself occupied in spiritual striving. However, after some time, spiritual striving becomes extremely enjoyable.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

حفت الجنة بالمكاره

Paradise is encircled by hardships.

As Hadrat Wālā himself says: "A few days of striving make the rest of the journey easy."

Hadrat Wālā was travelling to Kālpī when a very senior police officer who spoke very good English and was also my [the compiler] classmate happened to be on the same train. I was also with. This friend pointed towards me and said to Hadrat Wālā: "After seeing his condition [and how he has changed], I cannot pluck the courage to come to you." Hadrat Wālā replied immediately: "You must not look at him. The clock-winder winds the clock just once. Whatever changes take place thereafter take place on their own. First it will show one o' clock, then two, then three and so on."

What Hadrat Wālā meant was that he may consider it to be difficult at present but the difficulty will not remain once the bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is established. The heart will automatically want rectification. When that happens, he will happily want changes in his condition to take place. The difficulties which he is seeing before time are just imaginary difficulties. They must not be feared in the least.

> If you really want to, you must just continue traversing the path of love. O fellow traveller! Do not look to see if it is far or near.
>
> A lover feels the hardships before he goes mad in his love. Once he bears grief for a few days, he will enjoy happiness for the rest of his life.

In fact, his condition becomes such that if he perceives any deficiency in spiritual concern and supervision of his self, the seeker wastes away out of grief. Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> A seeker may experience thousands of grief but rarely does he experience a deficiency in the happiness of his heart.

To sum up, the spiritual striving and exertion which Hadrat Wālā prescribes in the path soon becomes the nucleus around which the seeker's life revolves, his spiritual food without which he does not have any rest, and in whose absence he considers to be his own death. In essence, this is really the case because these spiritual exertions are the causes and signs of a living heart and the sources of eternal spiritual progress.

> If my heart has taken joy from the movement of his eyelids, then I am happy because this has added to the causes of my crying.

The acquisition of Tasawwuf is made easy

The Sufism of Hadrat Wālā is based entirely on the Qur'ān and Hadīth. This is obvious from his books *Masā'il as-Sulūk, at-Tasharruf* and *at-Takashshuf*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

الدين يسر

Dīn is easy.

My purpose of saying this is to show that the tasawwuf as taught by Hadrat Wālā is very easy, there is no difficulty in it. The reader too must have gauged from the themes of the present chapter that Hadrat Wālā really simplified the path. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*. It is as though he paved a highway on which everyone – the elite and the masses, the scholars and the laymen, those who are free and those who are occupied, the healthy and the sick, the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor – can travel on very easily and without any fear.

A perceptive observer made the same observation when he said: "The sulūk of Hadrat Wālā is a royal sulūk." This is really the fact of the matter because Hadrat Wālā does not impose spiritual exercises and striving, does not order a seeker to sever ties, nor does he instruct him to give up luxuries and lawful things. Instead, he stresses: "Live in absolute comfort and rest so that love for Allāh *taʿālā* may develop in the heart and the temperament may feel energetic - which is an aid in acts of worship. However, do not stray towards obedience, watch the

self vigilantly, take courage in doing whatever has to be done, and also engage in some dhikr and spiritual practices based on how much one can bear and how much time one has. Allāh willing, realizing one's objective is certain. There is neither the need to eat less nor to sleep less. Both these exertions are to be left out in our times because the temperaments are overcome by weakness from before. However, it is essential to speak less and to interact less with people, but not so less that it results in retraction in the heart."

If this is not royal sulūk what is it? Hadrat Wālā himself says: "One does not need a blanket and tattered and torn clothes to be a Sufi. Instead, if Allāh *taʿālā* confers on a person, he can be a Sufi even while wearing two shawls and living as a king provided he acquires them in the correct manner."

The path is easy but we make it difficult

Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Wālā has simplified the path so much that there is no difficulty whatsoever in it.

> You have made the path so easy that we can say that you made the path the destination.

However, if a person does not follow the principles and makes it difficult on himself, it is no fault of the path; it is the haphazardness of the one treading it.

> If you consider it to be easy, you will certainly find love to be easy. But if you make it difficult on yourself, you will experience difficulties.

I quote a recent statement of Hadrat Wālā on this subject. He said: "The path is absolutely clear and level, but people make it difficult by their misuse and false premises. They fall into worries through their own doings. In fact, even the ʿulamā' are fallen into errors. A Maulwī Sāhib who is a senior ʿālim and intelligent man was, until now, worried over the fact that he still cannot get up for tahajjud without an alarm clock. He wrote: 'It is so sad that I am still dependent on these external things [to wake me up]. My heart still does not have that urge whereby I will have no need for an alarm and I am able to wake up automatically.'"

"I consoled him by writing: 'How many external things will you be able to save yourself from? Let alone one alarm, we are in need of countless other things. We need clothes, we need

shelter and numerous other necessities of life. These are all external things as well. If you cannot save yourself from so many things, why are you so worried about an alarm? When Allāh *taʿālā* Himself made us dependent on His bounties, why should we hope to be independent of them?'"

> If this is what the Master of my Dīn wants, then away with my contentment.

"If you cannot wake up without an alarm, what is the need to grieve? Allāh *taʿālā* has provided us with clocks and alarms, we must use them. The objective is to wake up – whether we wake up with an alarm or without it. If the objective is realized, why should you grieve over why you cannot wake up without an alarm?"

Allāh's special favour

After relating the above incident, Hadrat Wālā said: "All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* for placing the correct points in my heart through which people came out of darkness and entered into light, and the path became completely clear to them. When the lamp-lighter puts on the lamp, darkness is removed and the path is seen clearly. Allāh *taʿālā* then blessed him with eyes and legs. If he uses them, he will traverse the path without hesitation and reach wherever he wishes to go. If someone does not even lift his leg, places it haphazardly which causes him to trip and fall, or walks with his eyes closed, is it the fault of the lamp-lighter?! Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

هٰذَا بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً

These are sources of enlightenment from your Sustainer, a guidance and a mercy.[1]

This point came to my mind that *basā'ir* refers to eyes, guidance refers to the path, and mercy refers to the destination."

Hadrat Wālā said with real force and confidence on one occasion: "Even if I may not have the inspiration to practise, I thank Allāh *taʿālā* profusely over the fact that I do not have even an iota of doubt or misgiving about the path."

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 203.

In short, Hadrat Wālā made the path absolutely clear and easy. If any person treads it according to the principles, Allāh willing, he can reach the destination very easily.

A Few Important Principles Which Would Help A Person To Benefit From Hadrat Wālā

I feel it would be appropriate to explain a few special and extremely important principles which – Allāh willing – will help a person tremendously to benefit from Hadrat Wālā. They are listed briefly to serve as a gist of the present chapter. Details have been learnt from this chapter itself. These principles are derived from them.

1. Studying books on rectification:

The first thing a seeker must do is to study Hadrat Wālā's book, *Qasd as-Sabīl*. He must study it carefully one or two times. A general overview of the path will be gauged from it and the objective will be learnt. If a person cannot understand it by himself, he should consult an intelligent person to explain it to him. If before reverting to Hadrat Wālā he studies some of his books, especially *Taʿlīm ad-Dīn, Islāh ar-Rusūm, Bahishtī Zewar* and his *Mawā'iz* which have been printed up to now, then he will learn some of the necessary details of the path. This will make it very easy for him when corresponding with Hadrat Wālā for his own rectification. Seekers who do not know the basics of the path write many unprincipled things to Hadrat Wālā which results in his having to ask questions repeatedly, thereby delaying the realization of one's objective. In fact, there were times when Hadrat Wālā wrote to some of them: "You must first study one hundred of my lectures and then write to me."

2. Remain focused on the objective

A person should neither request bayʿah at the beginning nor consider it to be essential because the fundamental objective is to learn the path. He should therefore request this first. There will be no harm in requesting bayʿah once complete mutual affinity is established. However, if Hadrat Wālā says that complete mutual affinity has not been established, the seeker must accept it without any complaint. He must never ever insist on bayʿah. Instead, he must occupy himself more than before in acquiring affinity because it is a well known fact that

as long as Hadrat Wālā is not convinced of a seeker's genuine quest and does not perceive complete mutual affinity, he does not accept bayʿah. The joy of bayʿah is only experienced when these two points are established. Before that, there is no benefit in bayʿah. In fact, it could prove detrimental and harmful.

Some immature claimants of shaykhdom object against Hadrat Wālā and accuse him of being against the accepted principle of sulūk, viz. a shaykh must be desirous of proliferating the path. Hadrat Wālā said: "The path is not proliferated through bayʿah but through teaching and instruction. Do I ever reject teaching the path? In fact, I can say that – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – teaching the path is done so much here that it is probably not done to the same extent elsewhere. After all, I have no other activity here."

I [the compiler] say: It is really true. Hadrat Wālā is so desirous of proliferating the path that I do not think it can be found to such an extent anywhere else. He constantly says: "My heart desires to explain the reality of the path to the entire world as much as I have understood it. I am severely disturbed when people do not understand it and go to pains into thinking how I can cast it in their hearts. This is also one of the reasons why I am disturbed by people."

We constantly observe how freely and openly Hadrat Wālā explains facts and truths when the right addressee comes to him. He would go at length in explaining these truths in his blessed assembly and causes oceans to gush forth.

3. The best way of deriving benefit

The best way of deriving benefit from Hadrat Wālā is to first obtain permission from him and then to sit silently in his assemblies for a period of time. The seeker must listen attentively to his statements and observe incidents carefully so that he develops affinity with the path and with Hadrat Wālā, and learns the manner of rectification. Then once he returns to his place of residence, he must write to Hadrat Wālā describing one defect at a time. He must continue his rectification in this way. He must not mention the next defect without having rectified the previous one first. He may enquire from Hadrat Wālā about certain forms of dhikr during this period but not enquire about it without having commenced rectification of his

self first. This is because Hadrat Wālā certainly does not consider mere dhikr and spiritual practices to be enough for the realization of one's objective. When requesting permission to make dhikr, the seeker must inform Hadrat Wālā that he is already corresponding with him for his rectification. This is because Hadrat Wālā has many letters which he has to reply to and it is very difficult for him to remember without information from the seekers.

4. Remain firm on the principles of rectification

A seeker must supervise his self all the time and adhere to Hadrat Wālā's principles with awareness and courage for the rectification of his defects. Although he may experience some fatigue in the beginning, when he acts against his self repeatedly, he will start to experience ease by the will of Allāh *taʿālā*. Hadrat Wālā says in this regard: "It is only through repetition in deeds that deeds become easy. However, a seeker must not await ease. He must continue doing every deed even if he does not experience any ease throughout his life."

A seeker must also bear in mind Hadrat Wālā's statement with regard to courage. He says: "Courage which is not followed by success cannot be termed courage. It is merely an intention of courage. If full courage is resorted to in order to save one's self from shortcomings which are within one's control, there is no reason why a seeker should not succeed."

Hadrat Wālā also says: "If any mistake is committed due to lack of courage, the seeker must repent immediately and renew his courage. He must neither become despondent nor grieve over why the mistake was committed. The mistake will be atoned through action."

I feel it will be most beneficial to repeat Hadrat Wālā's statement from *Tashīl at-Tarīq* because it contains a complete course of action for the path. He writes: "Do not worry about actions which are not within your control, but be courageous in carrying out those which are within your control. If you commit an error, make up for the past by seeking forgiveness and renew your courage for the future. Together with courage, you must resort to ardent supplication."

5. The amount of dhikr must be appropriate

Once a seeker obtains permission for dhikr, he must set an amount which he can bear and for which he has time. It must not be so little that a seeker experiences no difficulty at all, nor so much that he cannot fulfil. As far as possible, he must not miss his dhikr and other spiritual practices. Missing them on any day results in immense lack of blessings. He must also make a practice of engaging in some form of dhikr while walking about and moving around. Hadrat Wālā said to me on one occasion: “Consider dhikr to be your essential task. You may speak when there is a need and then continue with your dhikr once again. Like a tailor who continues sewing and also speaks when there is a need. However, his actual focus remains on his sewing.” Hadrat Wālā also taught one way of reducing one’s speech. He said: “Do not initiate a conversation. If the other person asks something, reply according to the need and occupy yourself with dhikr once again. Similarly, do not go to anyone unnecessarily.”

Hadrat Wālā also says: “Do not increase your interactions with people without any real need. If the heart feels a bit fatigued by dhikr and solitude, you may pacify your heart by sitting with your wife and children or with friends who are of your spiritual lineage. You may return to your dhikr once you feel reenergized.” Hadrat Wālā considers total engrossment and total discarding of lawful activities to have harmful consequences.

6. Intention must be pure

The different forms of dhikr, salāh, recitation of the Qur’ān and other similar spiritual practices must be done with the intention of creating Allāh’s love in the heart and acquiring His pleasure. These practices must not be done with an empty mind as a mere habit. The seeker must try to maintain the consciousness of Allāh *taʿālā* which is experienced when engaged in these practices even after completing them. Constant concern and consciousness are extremely necessary in this path.

7. Protect the heart from disruption

Keep yourself protected from all that would cause disruption to the heart. Preservation of one’s health is included in this. Focus of the heart is the basis for benefit in this path.

8. Abstain from self-opinion and self-conceit

Hadrat Wālā considers self-opinion and self-conceit to be the worst obstacles in this path. He says: "If a person obliterates his opinions he will see the treasures which Allāh *taʿālā* showers on him – treasures which are well beyond his imagination. Obedience to one's shaykh - which is severely needed is included in this. Do not do anything on your own accord. In addition to obedience to one's shaykh being from among the etiquette of the path, it contains every type of ease and comfort for the seeker. It also makes him worry-free." The seeker should therefore hasten in informing his shaykh of his conditions and follow his recommendations. When the shaykh makes a recommendation, the seeker must follow it without any hesitation and objection. He must remain engrossed in his actions in accordance with the shaykh's recommendation accompanied by full confidence in him no matter how much the self may disapprove. Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* says:

> You will not be able to reach any station in this path if you do not endeavour. If you want success, you will have to obey your tutor.

The fundamental thing is to remain occupied, and its fruits will be borne in accordance with one's capabilities. Hadrat Wālā quotes the following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* quite often:

> Do not be a slave to the condition of receiving a wage because the Master knows fully well how to nurture and sustain His slaves.

Hadrat Wālā also says with regard to self-obliteration: "Self-obliteration is the first step in this path and, in another way, also the final step. If a seeker has not acquired this quality, you must conclude that he has not experienced even a whiff of this path."

I [the compiler] say: Hadrat Wālā pays most attention to the development of this quality. If a seeker cooperates with him in the attention which he pays to it then – no matter how much the self may dislike it – even if it is accommodated rationally, the treasure of self-obliteration which is acquired after many years of striving will be acquired very quickly through Allāh's grace under the programme of rectification as devised by Hadrat Wālā.

9. Be mindful of the rights of fellow humans

Hadrat Wālā stresses consciousness of the rights of fellow humans – especially those rights which, if not fulfilled, cause harm to others. A seeker must therefore pay particular attention to not causing any harm to anyone – neither by his words nor by his actions.

10. The manner of rectifying defects

This final point makes mention of the manner of rectifying defects. It is a point which every seeker must adopt. Hadrat Wālā says that a seeker must list all his evils on a piece of paper, and continue adding to the list as he remembers and recalls them. He must also be continually wary of their treatment and utilize his courage for it. Those that are removed from his system through the treatment must be struck off from the list. Those that remain – whether completely or to a certain extent – must be left in the list. When the seeker writes to Hadrat Wālā for his rectification, he must mention the one shortcoming which he considers to be most important. If he is unsure about which one he must mention, he must draw a lot. The one which is drawn must be mentioned in the letter to Hadrat Wālā. If the seeker already tried treating it, he must make mention of this fact in the letter.

A seeker must not write more than one defect in the same letter. He must also note a few examples of the defect. He must continue writing letters about this one defect until he acquires firmness in abstaining from it. Once he acquires firmness – and Hadrat Wālā also testifies to the firmness and permits him to mention the next defect – he must present the next defect. He must rectify all his defects in this way.

A simple du'ā for the realization of one's objective

I conclude the above points with a du'ā' which my eyes coincidentally fell on while I was reading *Munājāt Maqbūl.* When my eyes fell on it, I thought to myself that it contains the essence of the sulūk of Hadrat Wālā and it is a du'ā' for the acquisition of all the lofty stations of tasawwuf. This also affirms the fact that Hadrat Wālā's teachings and conditions comply with the Qur'ān and Sunnah. If the seekers read it occasionally in order to create awareness, acquire blessings and receive inspiration for actions, then – Allāh willing – it will

help them tremendously in easing the path and realizing their objective. The duʿā’ is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْأَلُكَ تَوْفِيْقَ اَهْلِ الْهُدٰى، وَاَعْمَالَ اَهْلِ الْيَقِيْنِ، وَمُنَاصَحَةَ اَهْلِ التَّوْبَةِ، وَعَزْمَ اَهْلِ الصَّبْرِ، وَجِدَّ اَهْلِ الْخَشْيَةِ، وَطَلَبَ اَهْلِ الرَّغْبَةِ، وَتَعَبُّدَ اَهْلِ الْوَرَعِ، وَعِرْفَانَ اَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ حَتّٰى اَلْقَاكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You strength for good deeds as possessed by those who are guided, actions of those who have conviction, sincerity of the repentant, determination of the patient ones, striving of the fearful [those who fear Allāh], aspiration of the yearning ones, worship of the pious, and cognition of the knowledgeable – until I meet You.

The reality of Hadrat Wālā's path of sulūk

I now conclude this chapter on spiritual instruction with a statement of Hadrat Wālā in which he explains the reality of his sulūk in a very clear and fine manner. I may have quoted it previously.

He said while speaking about something: "Here we only teach how to connect [with Allāh *taʿālā*]; we do not know what this Sufism is. We are students, we do not even possess knowledge. All we do is teach how to practise on the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Thereafter, whoever is to receive anything in this way receives it. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, when he receives it, it is something which no eye beheld, no ear heard of and no human heart ever imagined. Outwardly it is nothing – there is no ecstasy, no fervour, no exposition and no miracle. I occasionally snap my little girl's knuckles, and I tell her to pinch my cheeks. Now look at this, is it the action of a Sufi? When we went on hajj, my father purchased fish which was caught from the sea. I thought to myself that it must have salt in its flesh, so it should be cooked without salt. Subsequently, it was prepared without any salt and was cooked very well. Although no salt was added, there was a suitable amount of salt in it. In the same way, the "salt" over here [in the Khānqāh] is not added from the top. It is inside and displays its saltiness after it is cooked. The saltiness is only perceived by the one who eats. Similarly, a person who has never eaten a mango in his life cannot be made to understand its taste through mere explanations and similes. Its taste can only be perceived after it is eaten."

I [the compiler] say: Glory to Allāh! The genuine and prescribed tasawwuf is what is to be found with Hadrat Wālā. However, its fruits are only borne when a person reverts in accordance with the path and acts as prescribed. After all, according to Hadrat Wālā, success can only come with action.

> Act and continue with your [good] actions. Give up all your talking. This path requires nothing but action.
>
> The path requires action, not claims. Claims without action are of no essence.

When giving the example of a sea fish in the above-quoted statement, Hadrat Wālā stated that its salt becomes apparent after it is cooked. Thus, the precondition is that it must be cooked. This is where the seekers generally falter – they either do not do what they are supposed to do or they do it haphazardly. If a seeker acts according to Hadrat Wālā's above-listed principles, he will personally see the fruits and blessings of his statements and teachings. This has already been observed by countless seekers. Those who are deprived of it are deprived because of their own shortcomings. Hadrat Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> Without striving you will not reach any station in this path. If you desire success, you will have to obey your tutor.

In the above-quoted statement, Hadrat Wālā said: "when he receives it, it is something which no eye beheld, no ear heard of and no human heart ever imagined". Hadrat Wālā gives the reason for it by quoting the statement of an erudite scholar. He said: "Those who are in the spiritual lineage of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib are able to reach Allāh *taʿālā* very quickly although there are not many spiritual exercises and striving in his system. The reason for this is that reaching Allāh *taʿālā* in this lineage is through a pull and not through treading. This pull is through the blessing of following the Sunnah because the fruit of following the Sunnah is becoming the beloved of Allāh *taʿālā*. And a "pull" is essential for becoming His beloved."

رَبَّنَا اَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُوْرَنَا وَاغْفِرْلَنَا اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

O Allāh! Perfect for us our light and forgive us. Surely You have power over everything.

Gratitude

I thank Allāh *taʿālā* profusely for having enabled me to complete this most important chapter on "Spiritual Instruction" through His grace and kindness, and through the blessings of Hadrat Wālā's attention and prayers. Due to my incapability I did not even have the courage to raise my pen to write it.

> The nights and days of separation from the beloved have come to an end. This is the good omen which I took. The ʿīd has passed and the task is completed.
>
> Say to the dawn of hope which has been secluded behind the veil of the unseen to come out so that the dark night may end.
>
> All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that when the bud of the flower rose up, the pride of the forest and the youth of the thorns came to an end.
>
> The distress of those long nights and grief of the heart – everything came to an end when they came under the shade of hair-locks of the beloved.
>
> O companion! The goblet must be filled with long life and a drink so that grief and intoxication may end through your efforts.
>
> Although my distress was due to your hair-locks, this problem too has been solved by the beautiful countenance of the beloved.
>
> Although no one considers Hāfiz to be worthy of anything, all thanks over the fact that the countless and endless striving has come to an end.

As far as possible I made a full endeavour to pen everything related to Hadrat Wālā's spiritual instruction. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* through whose help countless essential issues and unique researches of Hadrat Wālā on this subject were presented.

I moved my tongue thousands of times but still could not express myself

However, when I think about Hadrat Wālā's great status in the field of spiritual instruction, I can take an oath and say that whatever I recorded appears to be totally insufficient. I am left

to regret the fact that I did not really write anything at all. As Ghālib said:

> There are thousands of wishes and I could lose my life over each and every wish. Many wishes issued forth but they were still insufficient.

As I said:

> This heart was not to be exposed, and so it was not. I moved my tongue thousands of times but still could not express myself.

Even if I were able to express Hadrat Wālā's status in the field of spiritual instruction according to what I have in my mind, his essential status would still remain concealed because true recognition of Hadrat Wālā can neither be realized by an unqualified person like me nor by anyone else. After all, only one or two personalities of this level come into this world after centuries. As per the statement of an observer, "It is futile to hope to find all of Hadrat Wālā's qualities in any of those who benefited from his company. No one can possess all of his qualities. Yes, someone will have certain qualities and another will have some other qualities." The person was certainly correct.

None could truly recognize Hadrat Wālā

I recall Hadrat Wālā's own written statement on this subject. Hadrat Wālā's nephew and special khalīfah, Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib – based on his special relationship with Hadrat Wālā – wrote a note to Hadrat Wālā in which he made reference to a certain Hadīth and asked with genuine enthusiasm: "Who is the most beloved to you from among all your associates." He also promised: "If you instruct me to keep this a secret for the rest of my life, I will not express it to anyone." Hadrat Wālā wrote back without any formalities: "Had there been anyone, I would not hesitate in saying who it is. The truth of the matter is:

> Everyone considers himself to be my friend, while the fact is that none could fathom my inner secrets.

No one had total and absolute affinity with him. And that in itself is the basis for unfamiliarity. It is possible that my own shortcoming is the cause of it."

Since Hadrat Wālā does not like to hurt anyone's feelings in the least, he prohibited him from divulging the above reply. However, Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib wrote back to him saying: "I feel it will be more beneficial for the seekers if [Hadrat Wālā's] reply is quoted in *Tarbīyyatus Sālik*. Perhaps someone will have the urge to develop total and absolute affinity with Hadrat Wālā."

Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib added: "By Allāh, I am extremely desirous of learning Hadrat Wālā's secrets, and this is the reason for my question. If the secrets are not beyond an unworthy person like myself to bear, may Allāh *taʿālā* enable me to learn them."

Hadrat Wālā replied as follows: "My dear one. It will be better if it is quoted. The only thing which was stopping me was that I might hurt the feelings of my beloved associates. Since there is a more important wisdom in quoting it, I agree to its disclosure. My dear nephew! Where do I have any secrets? I merely quoted the Maulānā's statement [referring to the couplet] for the sake of blessings. If anyone did not develop complete affinity with my temperament, it is not of my doing, it is of the lovers. Close following, awareness and emulation are the ways to it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. Once this affinity is realized, I will automatically have the urge to divulge my secrets if there are any or if any are created."

In short, if no one could fathom Hadrat Wālā's secrets completely, and even if he were to deliver thousands of lectures, he will not be able to express Hadrat Wālā's essential and fundamental status.

> Hadrat Wālā's station is beyond intelligence and understanding. If anyone learns anything, he would really learn nothing. If anyone understands anything, he would really understand nothing.

A milestone for those of sound understanding

Thus, despite my intense efforts and the lengthiness of this chapter, Hadrat Wālā's essential rank as regards spiritual instruction was not to be exposed, and therefore remained hidden. The following couplet of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* applies to me word for word:

> I melted my life so that the objective of the heart may be realized but this did not happen. I burnt myself in this hope but it did not materialize.

The following couplet written by myself applies to Hadrat Wālā:

> The secret was not exposed even when it was exposed. The point remained unexplained even when it was explained.

The following couplet of Hadrat Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* applies to both conditions:

> Neither is there any end to his beauty nor any limit to Saʿdī's words. The one who has the ailment of constant thirst dies a thirsty man while the ocean remains as it is.

Be that as it may, this collection will certainly present the gist of Hadrat Wālā's programme and system of spiritual instruction. People of sound understanding and affinity will – Allāh willing – be able to get a glimpse of Hadrat Wālā's fundamental and essential status in the field of spiritual instruction.

What was considered to be the destination turned out to be a dream

Another way in which Allāh *taʿālā* displayed Hadrat Wālā's position as a lighthouse of instruction and a centre of rectitude and guidance of this era is that because an erudite shaykh and spiritual master of his calibre cannot be seen in these times, every genuine seeker's gaze turns towards Hadrat Wālā. Consequently, most letters of the seekers contain the point that they do not see any erudite shaykh of Hadrat Wālā's calibre, this is why they cannot seem to feel settled with anyone else.

The fact of the matter is that through the help of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā very clearly explained all the essential points of the path and established Allāh's proof on the creation. The incorrect thoughts which the masses and the elite had about tasawwuf and the non-objectives which they considered to be the objectives were removed, and the original and genuine tasawwuf was displayed as clear as the light of day. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards and may He enable us to enjoy his company for a long time.

> May Allāh keep Majdhūb safe and sound. He awoke from his sleep and what he thought to be the destination turned out to be a dream.

I was actually thinking of Hadrat Wālā when I composed the above couplet and Majdhūb actually referred to him. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable Hadrat Wālā's blessings to increase by the day and to be continually showered for a long time on the Muslims. May He enable everyone to benefit from his blessings. Āmīn.

A compounded joy

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* and all thanks to Him that as soon as I completed this chapter, the first five parts of *Ashraf as-Sawānih* volume one which is currently under print have been printed, and I received a sample copy of these five parts today. I was overjoyed by this beautiful coincidence. All praise is due to Allāh, I – the compiler of these pages – became a manifestation of the following couplet:

> I got the fragrance of the flower from one side and received a message from my beloved from the other side. I am that mad man who experienced spring from both sides.

A gift from the heart

In concluding this chapter on spiritual instruction, I present the following couplets of Hadrat Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* as a prayer for Hadrat Wālā:

> Listen O you parrot who exposes the secrets! May your beak never be devoid of gratitude.
>
> May you remain green. May you experience good fortune forever because you presented a good picture of the beloved.

I now quote the conclusion of the *Mathnawī Sharīf* of Hadrat Rūmī *rahimahullāh*. The conclusion was written by his son, Hadrat Maulānā Bahā' ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh*. These couplets apply totally to Hadrat Wālā.

> All thanks, this letter reached its destination. The postage amount was not less and it reached our brothers.

This speech elevates the skies. The one who passes through it reaches a high point.

Not the hilltop of the sky which is green, but to that high point which is higher than the skies.

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات...كتبه أحقر الزمن عزيز الحسن عفا عنه الله ذو المنن، وحفظه عن جميع الفتن، ما ظهر منها وما بطن.

لإحدى وعشرين من ذي القعدة (١٣٥٤ھ) يوم السبت، حال إقامته بالخانقاه الإمدادية الأشرفية بتهانه بهون.

KHULAFĀ

As per the practice of the spiritual masters, Hadrat Wālā confers permission for bay'ah and instruction in the path to some of his special associates after he establishes the presence of certain essential qualities in them. These qualities will be mentioned further on. The list of Hadrat Wālā's khulafā' is given towards the end of volume three of this biography. Based on the fact that he is a Mujaddid and a Hakīm al-Ummah, he made certain improvements to this concept, as he did to other religious concepts.

1. A Formal Record Of The Names And Addresses Of Khulafā'

Whenever he confers khilāfah to any of his associates, he records their full name and address so that it may serve as a record and reminder for him. He then publishes these details from time to time in his *Tanbīhāt Wasīyyat* so that a non-khalīfah may not claim to be his khalīfah and is unable to deceive people in this regard. Some persons tried to deceive people who then made inquiries with Hadrat Wālā about such persons because he has a list of all his khulafā'. Hadrat Wālā emphatically wrote that such persons are liars. There is no other way of rejecting the claims of such a fabricator. Hadrat Wālā also explains the wisdom behind publishing the names of his khulafā'. He says: "In past times, there were neither so many liars nor anyone who would fabricate a lie on such a matter. There was therefore no need for precautions of this type. Now there is a need which is also supported by incidents in this regard. Another wisdom behind publishing their names is that seekers may come to know of them and derive benefit from them."

2. Publishing The Names Of Khulafā'

If Hadrat Wālā does not know some of the spiritual conditions of any khalīfah or hears doubtful things about his spiritual conditions, he removes the name of such a person from his list as a precaution. However, in order to save such a person from humiliation, he does not publish his name. All he does is exclude the person's name in the next list which is published. Only the names of those whose khilāfah is maintained is published. So this was his method of removal by his own

choice. As for those who have passed away, their names have to be removed out of necessity. The method of removing their names is as follows: As he gets information about those who have passed on, he records their names in his diary. Periodically he publishes their names in his *Tanbīhāt Wasīyyat*, and then removes them and the previously mentioned ones from the total number. He writes: "The total number till now was such and such, after excluding such and such number, the total is now…"

He then adds the number of the new khulafā' to this total so that the number of present khulafā' can always be learnt easily.

I now present an example of how Hadrat Wālā used to remove a person from his list. He writes: "There are some khulafā' whose spiritual conditions I just cannot ascertain. I drew my attention to this in addendum seven, announcement number two. There are others whose spiritual conditions appear to be doubtful. As a precaution, I draw a separate list of khulafā'. Those who are not in it must not be considered to be my khulafā' at present. However, if anyone's condition is proven to be satisfactory in the future, his name will be re-entered."

Look! Hadrat Wālā did not expose the names of those who were removed so that they are not offended and humiliated. He only wrote the names of those who were maintained. He added one consideration: "When I say that the remaining ones must not be considered to be my khulafā' at present, I am not denying their capabilities, rather, I am not certain about their worthiness to be my khulafā'."

However, based on a severe demand, Hadrat Wālā acted against his general rule by writing to a certain person and informing him of the cancellation of his khilāfah and his bay'ah. He then published a copy of this letter in his *Tanbīhāt Wasīyyat*. Together with this, based on his extreme concern to uphold the limits, he added a general announcement: "My only reason is to inform those who may revert to such a person solely on the basis of my accepting his bay'ah and conferring khilāfah to him. I am not addressing those who do not revert to him on this basis. Every person has full rights to make his own choice as regards Dīnī matters."

In short, Hadrat Wālā considers every matter within its limits. There are neither excesses nor shortcomings in any matter. It is most difficult to possess a just and equitable quality of this level and it is extremely rare.

> This good fortune is not acquired by physical means.
> It is solely a bestowal from the Giver [Allāh *taʿālā*].

3. Saving People From Excesses And Shortcomings As Regards Khulafā'

In his effort to save people from excesses and shortcomings as regards his khulafā', Hadrat Wālā wrote a very beneficial theme which was also printed in *an-Nūr*, dated Dhū al-Hijjah 1351 A.H. Hadrat Wālā explains the reality behind including or removing a person from his list of khulafā' so that there may be no excesses in having good thoughts about those whose names are included nor any bad thoughts about those whose names have been left out. Hadrat Wālā's article will first be quoted verbatim. It will then be explained according to need so that it may be easier to understand. This is because although it encompasses all objectives, it is extremely concise. If it is still not understood after my explanation, an erudite ʿālim should be consulted to explain it verbally. It is as follows:

Putting an end to evil thoughts and excessive good thoughts

"When I wilfully remove a person from this list it is due to the severance of information about him. The absence of knowledge about his suitability does not necessarily negate his suitability. When I include a person in this list, it is based on the overriding assumption that he possesses certain essential qualities, viz. firmly established piety, rectitude, conditional affinity with the path, the qualification to rectify others and an expectation that he will reach the level of perfection in the above-listed qualities. This is similar to the issuing of a certificate to a student who completes his studies."

I [the compiler] now provide an explanation to the above. It contains three parts.

The first part

> When I wilfully remove a person from this list it is due to the severance of information about him. The absence of knowledge about his suitability does not necessarily negate his suitability.

In this part Hadrat Wālā says: When I wilfully remove a person from the list of khulafā' (details in this regard were provided in point number two above) the reason for it is that I did not receive any information about him for a considerable period of time or received doubtful information about him (which is as good as not receiving any information because when it comes to khilāfah, only information which is convincing and satisfying is worthy of consideration. As for doubtful information, it is as good as no information at all). When the spiritual conditions of a person are not known or one hears doubtful conditions about him, satisfaction over his condition no longer remains. Thus, the reason for removing him from the list is that knowledge about his suitability is no longer present, and not that Hadrat Wālā has obtained knowledge about his unsuitability. In this part, Hadrat Wālā completely seals off any way of developing bad thoughts about those whose names have been struck off.

The second part

> When I include a person in this list, it is based on the overriding assumption that he possesses certain essential qualities, viz. firmly established piety, rectitude, conditional affinity with the path, the qualification to rectify others and an expectation that he will reach the level of perfection in the above-listed qualities.

In this part Hadrat Wālā expresses the qualities on whose basis khilāfah is conferred. They are:

1. The person must be pious.
2. He must have undertaken his own rectitude.
3. He must have developed affinity with this path. However, this affinity must not be mere rational affinity but conditional affinity [to do with one's spiritual condition].
4. He must have developed the ability to supervise the rectification of others.
5. He must have acquired firmness in the above qualities.
6. It must be expected of him that although he has firmness in the above qualities to the level of necessity, he will progress in the future and will acquire perfection in them.

Hadrat Wālā added the condition of "overwhelming assumption" to show that the realization of these qualities is assumed, it is not definitive nor can it be so.

In this part Hadrat Wālā also seals off the possibility of excessive good thoughts about those who have been conferred with khilāfah. This was expressed in the title "Putting an end to excessive good thoughts". Furthermore, by adding the condition of "overwhelming assumption" Hadrat Wālā set a complete seal on all those doubts which could be experienced by the one conferring the khilāfah against any of the khulafā' who has not reached perfection at present or – Allāh forbid – whose condition changes in the future.

The third part

> This is similar to the issuing of a certificate to a student who completes his studies.

In this part Hadrat Wālā clarifies the second part with an example. It is a very clear example which is unconditionally accepted by even the scholars who are concerned with the external self. Hadrat Wālā says that it [conferring of khilāfah] is exactly like the issuing of a certificate to a student who has completed his studies. The issuing of a certificate to him does not mean that he has acquired perfection and mastery in those sciences. Rather, it is issued on the sole overwhelming assumption that he has developed a certain level of affinity with those sciences whereby, if he continues studying them, there is a strong hope that he will gradually reach the level of perfection. If he, due to his negligence and ingratitude, wastes away his affinity and capability, no accusation whatsoever can be levelled on the one who issued the certificate. Rather, it is the student's own fault.

In the same way, when khilāfah is conferred to a person, it does not mean that he has reached a level of perfection in those qualities right now. Rather, khilāfah is conferred on that overwhelming assumption that he certainly has acquired an essential level of those qualities, and if he continues trying and endeavouring to perfect them, then there is a strong hope that he will gradually and eventually reach a level of perfection in them.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I [the compiler] have now completed my explanation of Hadrat Wālā's article. The reader

must have observed how Hadrat Wālā conveyed so many unique themes in this one concise and meaningful statement. Glory to Allāh! Look at his eloquence, style, finesse and conciseness. Look at his factualism and the power of his pen!

4. Khulafā' Who Instruct Through Companionship

Another peculiarity of Hadrat Wālā is that just recently in addition to having khulafā'-e-bayʿah, he appointed khulafā'-e-suhbah. We quote a portion of Hadrat Wālā's article on this subject as published in *an-Nūr* dated Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1354 A.H.

"First addendum with regard to khulafā': About ten months ago a thought suddenly came into my heart that I have certain associates (who are quite able to instruct others but do not fulfil all the prerequisites of inducting others as murīds. I am still waiting for them to experience certain special spiritual conditions). I felt I should permit them to instruct others without accepting bayʿah from them. Subsequently, the following were given this permission. I decided to give such persons the title of "Mujāz Suhbah". In other words, those who have been given permission to convey benefit to others solely through companionship. In order to differentiate them from the others, I gave the first group the title of "Mujāz Bayʿah". If the anticipated spiritual conditions appear in those who are Mujāz Suhbah (the identification of which I alone have the prerogative. If they await it, it will certainly negate sincerity), I will include them among the Mujāz Bayʿah and publish their names in that list. I now present a separate list of those who are Mujāz Suhbah. The two lists will remain separate in future as well." (the list is then presented).

Glory to Allāh! Many intricate wisdoms are considered in this decision – both for those who have been conferred this title and also those who are to benefit from them. For example, since these Mujāzīn (plural of Mujāz) have developed sufficient capability in teaching and instructing, why should people not be given an opportunity to benefit from them? Why should people be deprived when they can benefit according to the extent of the Mujāz Suhbah's present spiritual condition? At the same time, the Mujāzīn have not been left to neglect their own rectification and perfection. Instead, they have been informed that the development of certain special qualities within them is awaited. In this way, they will not feel smug by

the permission which has been granted to them. Rather, they will try even harder to reach the level of perfection and remain occupied in striving to this end. Consequently, I myself saw several of these Mujāz Suhbah striving even harder for their own rectification and perfection.

Hadrat Wālā himself said: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* my feeling that conferring permission of this nature will be very beneficial for the beneficiaries themselves proved to be most correct. There was probably not a single one from them who did not burst out crying when he was informed of this permission. And when he thought about his own unworthiness, he began striving toward his own rectification. I gauged this from their subsequent letters."

I recall a statement of Hadrat Wālā in this regard: "Some levels of rectification are dependent on the person being conferred with khilāfah."

In the above-quoted article of Hadrat Wālā, he made reference to an intricate consideration, viz. the specification of the awaited spiritual conditions and the decision that they have appeared will be made solely by him and he alone will enjoy this prerogative. Those who have been appointed as Mujāz Suhbah have nothing to do with it. The wisdom behind this is that they will remain concerned about their rectification in every way possible. Had the spiritual conditions been specified to them from before hand, they would have confined themselves to endeavouring to acquire them only and would have disregarded paying attention to other matters.

Furthermore, if the Mujāzīn felt that those conditions have appeared – according to them – they would wait expectantly for the conferring of Mujāz Bayʿah on them; and this totally negates sincerity. Hadrat Wālā wants people to benefit from them while they themselves are aware of their shortcomings [without specifying what they are], and they continue in their efforts of self-rectification and remain occupied in efforts towards perfection. At the same time, their intentions in these efforts must be correct, viz. their objective must be perfection of their spiritual condition, not the acquisition of the title of Mujāz Bayʿah.

Hadrat Wālā did appoint some of these Mujāz Suhbah to Mujāz Bayʿah after he identified certain special spiritual conditions

which he had been awaiting and, in this way, all the prerequisites of a Mujāz Bayʿah were found in them.

5. The Manner Of Conferring Khilāfah

When Hadrat Wālā decides on appointing a person as his khalīfah, he informs him via a letter. He also instructs the person to inform some of his special friends. The purpose of this is so that others may come to know of it and people may be able to benefit from him. In most cases, Hadrat Wālā would inform the person as follows: "The idea came into my heart spontaneously that I should give you permission for bayʿah and instruction. I therefore confer it to you after placing my trust in Allāh *taʿālā*. May Allāh *taʿālā* perfect and popularize your benefit. If anyone wishes to revert to you, you must not refuse."

6. Khilāfah Is Conferred After Assurance And Confidence

Hadrat Wālā does not confer khilāfah merely as a coincidence. Rather, he only confers it when he thinks of it after observing a person's conditions. Once he thinks of it, he observes the person's conditions very carefully and scrutinizes them. In fact, he even notes the names of some people so that it would serve as a reminder for him to observe and scrutinize them. Once he experiences external assurance and spiritual confidence in the person, he confers khilāfah to him.

The failure of some people who resort to ruses in order to obtain khilāfah

Some people resorted to ruses in order to obtain khilāfah but they could not succeed. One person wrote to him: "The practice in this area is that when a person is about to leave this world, people urge him to repent. The people here are insisting that I should take up this task of urging the dying person. If Hadrat permits, I will do this." Hadrat Wālā replied: "You must do it verbally only; there is no need for repentance to be carried out by placing their hand in your hand. A verbal repentance is sufficient."

Hadrat Wālā then addressed us saying: "The man failed in realizing his objective because the masses consider bayʿah to be bayʿah only when it is done by placing one's hand in the hand of another. If anyone urges a person to repent verbally, they do not consider it to be bayʿah. I prohibited the man because if I had granted him permission, he would have considered himself to be a shaykh and in addition to this

special occasion [at the time of a person's death], he would gradually start inducting murīds."

Similarly, a reliable narrator related to me that some persons copied the spiritual conditions of other seekers from *Tarbīyyatus Sālik* – conditions on the basis of which those seekers were conferred with khilāfah – and sent them to Hadrat Wālā as if they were their own conditions. They did this in the hope of receiving khilāfah from Hadrat Wālā. However, as per Hadrat Wālā's statement: "If a person never consumed alcohol and now tries to act like a drunk man to show that he is intoxicated, then a regular drunkard will immediately recognize him as a fraud because a genuinely drunk state is completely different from a fabricated one", so such persons also failed in their objective.

A reply to a seeker's letter

Similarly, *Tarbīyyatus Sālik* contains the letter of a seeker who had been residing in the Khānqāh. In the letter, he quoted a few texts from *at-Takashshuf* (a book written by Hadrat Wālā). The crux of the texts which he quoted was that a seeker should not separate himself from his shaykh before reaching a level of perfection unless there is a severe need for him to depart. However, once he starts to experience spiritual blessings directly and the murīd reaches a level of perfection, there is no harm in leaving the shaykh's company at such a time. However, this applies to the person who no longer needs tutoring, he is merely occupied in strengthening his affinity. If this is not the case, he cannot progress without physical closeness with the shaykh.

After quoting these texts, the seeker said: "It has been five years since I left home. My father and grandfather have written many letters insisting on me to return home quickly. After studying all these texts [quoted above], I am very concerned about what I should do. I request Hadrat Wālā's advice."

Hadrat Wālā replied: "Quoting texts from my book stems from illnesses of the self in the hope that I will say that there is no longer any need for physical closeness. It also displays a sort of claim to perfection. Do you think these principles are not considered by myself? It would have been enough for you to describe your conditions and ask for my advice. This is one of the most intricate plots of the self."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the intricate plot of the self which Hadrat Wālā identified. Personalities of this calibre are known as spies of the hearts.

A reply to an ʿālim

An ʿālim wrote a lengthy letter in which he described the need to receive permission to induct murīds from our own elders so that he could fight against the bidʿatīs. If he does not have too much of courage to fight them, he could at least stop the people from innovations so that he could succeed against the bidʿatī shaykhs. Hadrat Wālā replied: "You self is very intelligent. Although I am not an intelligent person, I can recognize intelligent people. A mere reference suffices an intelligent person."

In short, Hadrat Wālā confers khilāfah after strict observation and scrutiny, and after a lot of thinking and pondering.

7. Learning And Obedience – The Fundamentals Of Khilāfah

Hadrat Wālā does not make a precondition of bayʿah before conferring khilāfah. We had related the incident of a person previously who resided in the Khānqāh and – as per Hadrat Wālā's practice most of the time – did not accept his bayʿah in the beginning. The man continued living in the Khānqāh and continued benefiting from Hadrat Wālā's teachings. When he was about to depart after quite some time, Hadrat Wālā gave him permission to accept bayʿah from others because he felt that the man was worthy of khilāfah. The man said: "Hadrat Wālā did not accept my own bayʿah as yet." Hadrat Wālā said: "There is still no need to accept bayʿah from you because the reality and objective of bayʿah have already been achieved. However, if you want, there is no harm in accepting your bayʿah now. In fact, there is hope for blessings in it." Thus, we see Hadrat Wālā appointing the man as a Mujāz Bayʿah first and accepting bayʿah from him after that. After relating this incident, Hadrat Wālā says: "I want to demonstrate practically that deriving benefit is not dependent on bayʿah. Rather it is dependent on learning and obedience – these are the fundamentals."

8. Non-'Ulamā' Who Are Worthy Of Khilāfah

Another peculiarity of Hadrat Wālā is the granting of permission to non-ʿālims who are worthy of khilāfah. They are

given permission only to work on the masses because it is far-fetched to expect ʿulamā' to have confidence in such khulafā'. In order to make this known, in his list of khulafā', Hadrat Wālā has "for the masses" written in brackets after the names of such khulafā'. However, there are a few non-ʿālims about whom it is expected that – due to their sound understanding – they will be able to inspire ʿulamā' and the latter too will not hesitate in reverting to them. Such khulafā' are given general permission and the words "for the masses" are not written after their names.

9. Arrangements For Khulafā' To Develop Expertise In Rectification

If Hadrat Wālā does not expect to develop affinity with a seeker from the beginning or a seeker merely wants to pledge bayʿah without following his programme of training, then in most cases he hands over such seekers to his own khulafā'. Apart from the many other benefits of this, a major benefit is that his khulafā' develop proficiency in rectification. There are several individuals of this nature who – by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* – are conveying immense benefits to the Muslims. So much so, through the blessings of their programme of training and instruction, several seekers reached a level of perfection and were conferred khilāfah by them [the khulafā' of Hadrat Wālā].

When a seeker's condition is complicated, the khulafā' consult Hadrat Wālā. Furthermore, Hadrat Wālā continually gets an opportunity to check the letters of the seekers whom he had handed over to his khulafā' and to see what replies his khulafā' wrote. He even expresses his approval to some of them and says with regard to them: "By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, they are of more benefit than many spiritual masters of our time." In the same vein, if he came to know that a certain khalīfah was becoming lax or delaying in answering to letters, Hadrat Wālā would stop handing over seekers to him.

Hadrat Wālā constantly emphasizes on them to train and tutor the seekers with special attention and affection. He also complains to them when they become inattentive in this regard.

In short, the khulafā' are benefiting from Hadrat Wālā's programme just as intern doctors receive practical training from their seniors in clinics and hospitals. Furthermore, Hadrat Wālā wants to convince them that the spiritual lineage

has to continue. He expressed his happiness several times by saying: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* I now have such associates who have understood the path very well and there is hope that – Allāh willing – the proliferation of the path will continue through them."

As mentioned in detail previously, Hadrat Wālā also says: "I desire all the Dīnī work which is currently entrusted to me to continue after me. I do not want anyone to express remorse in my absence and say: 'Now who is going to do this work?' It is also for this reason that I periodically delegate my various Dīnī services to others."

Hadrat Wālā's statement about interaction between a shaykh and his khulafā'

Finally, I present Hadrat Wālā's statement about how a khalīfah should interact with his shaykh after being conferred with khilāfah. He said: "Although a seeker does not need to be tutored by his shaykh after completion, it is essential for him to maintain a relationship of faith and gratitude for the rest of his life so that he may continue receiving blessings from him."

Hadrat Wālā's self-obliteration before his shaykh

Consequently, we see Hadrat Wālā always singing the praise of his shaykh to this day and ascribing all his knowledge and sciences to his service of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. The fact of the matter is that you would rarely come across a person who obliterated himself before his shaykh as Hadrat Wālā does. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this is the reason why so much of benefit is derived from him.

A person cannot be independent of his shaykh

Once a person completes his training, he must not consider himself to be independent of his shaykh. Although it is not essential to continue the programme of benefiting from the shaykh after becoming his khalīfah, it is still needed for progress in one's rank. In fact, in most situations the programme of benefiting from him remains on the level of necessity. This was learnt in detail under point number three. Even after being conferred with khilāfah, a person has not necessarily reached a level of perfection. Therefore, under no condition can one be independent of a shaykh who is alive. Consequently, we see all Hadrat Wālā's khulafā' continually benefiting from him and taking directives from him. This

benefits them tremendously. In fact, after experiencing it, they find they have a severe need for it. I know of many testimonies in this regard. As for those who considered themselves to be independent, their condition certainly changed [for the worse].

Hadrat Wālā goes to the extent of saying: "If a person does not have a senior overlooking him, then for his own wellbeing, he must consider his juniors to be his seniors, interact with them, and also take their advice on Dīnī matters when there is a need." Hadrat Wālā himself practises on this.

A picture of Hadrat Wālā's Khānqāh

From the above points the reader must have gauged how pure and sensible Hadrat Wālā's principles are on the issue of khilāfah. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā had many senior personalities, people of lofty spiritual ranks and conditions, scholars, and people of rectitude and piety as his khulafā'. And he still has such personalities. Due to their full occupation in dhikr by day and night, the following couplet of Hadrat Amīr Khusro *rahimahullāh* applies to them:

> I remain lying near your house every night. I beseech and cry to you every day.

I myself had the opportunity of observing this on many occasions. This is especially so in the month of Ramadān when many of those engaged in dhikr – including many khulafā' – are present in the Khānqāh. The following couplets compiled by myself apply to them:

> The drink-provider is one while the drinkers are many. They are all observed by his two intoxicated eyes.
>
> The house of love is experiencing a spring and splendour. Every drinker is in ecstasy.
>
> Look how wonderful these people are who are taking the drink of the love of Allāh *taʿālā*. How lovely this drunkenness and grand status of Allāh *taʿālā* is!
>
> Do not even ask about those who engage in Allāh's dhikr in the middle of the night. They are occupied with their hearts and tongues.
>
> What are you asking about the pain at dawn? This morsel is better than fish and chicken.

Although the room is small, it is filled with dhikr. How beautiful this singing is although it is not accompanied by drums and fiddles.

In this place, the heart repeats the name of Allāh all the time because this is what it hears all the time.

The atmosphere here is so healthy! The heart is cured without any medication.

O master! Look at the rank of our Ashraf! Come to the Khānqāh of our Ashraf.

Come, cast aside your pride and arrogance. How can I describe the effulgence here which is worthy of observation!?

The tongue cannot fully explain the blessings of this place because it is in a shore-less ocean.

Come so that you may personally see what you heard. Hearsay can never equal an eyewitness account.

I am speaking nothing but the truth because this is a matter of Dīn. Believe me because these are all eyewitness accounts.

Majdhūb is not saying all this from hearsay because whatever a Qalandar says, he says it after witnessing it.

The above couplets portray a true and genuine picture of Hadrat Wālā's Khānqāh. Furthermore, I personally witnessed how all types of seekers – the novices, the average ones and the masters – were benefiting according to their capabilities. I also said the following lines in this regard:

Spring is here. The joys are here. The large jars, bowls and goblets are being filled.

Everyone is satisfying his desires in your assembly. The seekers are bursting forth, Majdhūb is jumping up.

I also said the following couplets with reference to Khānqāh Ashrafī:

> By night and day there is a throng of those seeking the pain of the heart. Is this Khānqāh Ashrafī or is it a shop where the pain of the heart is obtained!?
>
> It is Khānqāh Ashrafī, not a place for the pain of the heart. Every particle here is a world for the pain of the heart.

However, this pain of the heart is a cure for all other pains. As I said:

> The pain of the heart cured all other pains. The difficulty of love made every other difficulty easy.

This is why the relaxing life which one experiences at Khānqāh Ashrafī is probably not experienced anywhere else.

The blessings of Hadrat Wālā's khulafā'

I now return to my original topic. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā's khulafā' are to be found in almost all levels of society and in almost every region of India. In fact, some of his khulafā' are also to be found in other countries. Apart from the many khulafā' who have passed away, the surviving khulafā' coincidentally number 74 – Hadrat Wālā's age at present. By the help of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of Hadrat Wālā, some of them are very active in the field of spiritual instruction and rectification of seekers. The Muslims are reforming tremendously through them and the servants of Allāh *taʿālā* are benefiting a lot. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, these khulafā' also enjoy acceptance.

The rank of Hadrat Wālā's associates

The above was said about those who were conferred with khilāfah. On one occasion Hadrat Wālā said with regard to his special programme of rectification and Sharʿī accountability: "All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* I am satisfied with the majority of my associates. Had I been over-accommodating, every type of people would have come and filled this place and caused confusion. All praise is due to Allāh, as regards understanding of Dīn and showing due importance to it, almost all my associates are worthy of khilāfah. However, since some amount of respectability is also needed for khilāfah, I am hesitant in conferring it to the others." Hadrat Wālā also expressed the same thoughts with regard to certain educated and superficially educated attendants by mentioning them

specifically. It is true, most of Hadrat Wālā's associates are of such a level by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The story of a builder

When a completely illiterate builder of Fatahpūr pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā, he became concerned about the speed with which work was done under contract and the one which was done under an owner's supervision. A wise, learned and righteous person who had not even pledged bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā said to me during my stay in Fatahpūr – which was quite some time ago – with regard to this builder: "We certainly witnessed the effects of Hadrat Maulānā. Anyone who became connected to him would attach full importance to practising on the Sharīʿah. He would worry about what was lawful and what was not in whatever he did."

The story of a barber

Similarly, a person related to me about a barber in Allāhābād. After pledging bayʿah to Hadrat Wālā, the barber gave up his profession solely because he had to shave the beards of most Muslims who came to him. Instead of cutting people's hair, he now earns a living as a cook who cooks for people for various occasions. He is earning much more than what he was earning previously as a barber. He always receives the best foods from the meals which he cooks. He is looked up with respect because of his cleverness, religiosity and honesty.

The story of a student

There was a student in a musjid studying under the musjid lamp. When it was the time to put off the musjid lamps, he put off the lamp immediately, lit his own lamp and continued studying. When a Maulānā who was a teacher in that place saw this, he said to those who were around him: "This student seems to be an associate of Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī." After making inquiries, he learnt that the student was in fact a disciple of Hadrat Wālā.

The story of an attendant

Similarly, one of Hadrat Wālā's attendants happened to stay over with a certain person in the Dār al-ʿUlūm at Deoband. When a lantern was brought, the attendant inquired as to whether it belonged to the Dār al-ʿUlūm. Even on this occasion,

a very old man who had met many elders and remained in their company asked: “Do you have a bond with Maulānā Thānwī?”

Every associate is a worthy jewel in his place

In short, by the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* most associates of Hadrat Wālā are worthy of khilāfah by virtue of their understanding of Dīn and adherence to piety. Others are rectified and reformed just by looking at them. In fact, as per Hadrat Wālā’s statement: “There are many seekers who undertake their rectification through correspondence. When they come here and I meet some of them for the first time, I feel that they are eligible for khilāfah. However, I hold back for some time as a precaution.”

These incidents and conditions show how clearly all-encompassing and perfect Hadrat Wālā’s blessings are. Hadrat Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says:

> If the river which flows through the sugar-cane farm were to dry up, the sugar-cane would not be able to supply sugar to the world.

The following couplet applies to the all-encompassing and perfect nature of Hadrat Wālā’s blessings:

> The entire world is intoxicated by your beauty without having drunk anything. May the evil eye not catch you. You made us drink a unique drink for free.

I compiled the following couplets with reference to Hadrat Wālā’s rank:

> The pain which is within him came out in such a way that his breathing caused the entire world to be ignited.
>
> Thousands of people have taken a light from him and are walking around with it in their hands. A single lamp lit countless lamps.
>
> May his heart remain alive forever by virtue of love. May his blessings continue reaching the world forever.

ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ. اَللّٰهُمَّ زِدْ فَزِدْ.

All praise is due to Allāh alone. All praise is due to Allāh alone.

The present chapter which is also a concluding chapter of the previous chapter on spiritual instruction is now concluded.

The English translation of this, the second volume of *Ashraf as-Sawāni*h̲ was completed on 9 Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1435 A.H. corresponding with 10 April 2014. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

Mahomed Mahomedy
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